

PROCEEDINGS  
of the sixth  
**Annual Conference on  
Mennonite Cultural Problems**



*Held at*  
**Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, August 1 and 2, 1947**







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**Program of the Sixth Annual Conference on  
Mennonite Cultural Problems**

**Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, August 1 and 2, 1947**

**EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS**

*Friday, August 1, 9:00 to 12:00 a.m.*

**Chairman: Ed. G. Kaufman, Bethel College**

**Opening Devotions**

**"Home Economics in the Mennonite School"**

**Miss Olive Wyse, Goshen College**

**"Kingdom Service in the Home"**

**Mrs. Eva Harshbarger, Bethel College**

**"Open Doors for Mennonite Women in Social work"**

**Miss Edna Ramseyer, Bluffton College**

*Afternoon Session, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.*

**"The Voluntary Service Program"**

**Elmer Ediger, Akron, Pennsylvania**

**"Developing a Sense of Mission Toward the Teaching Ministry in  
Mennonite Schools and Colleges"**

**Symposium composed of J. S. Schultz,  
Bluffton College, Carl Krieder, Goshen College, I. G. Neufeld,  
Tabor College, Carlton Wittlinger, Messiah College**



## CULTURAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

*Friday Evening, 7:30 to 9:30*

Chairman: Jacob J. Enz, Nappanee, Indiana

Devotions

"The Changing Nature of the Mennonite Home"

I. W. Bauman, Bluffton College

*Saturday, August 2, 9:30 a.m.*

Chairman: Carl Lehman, Bluffton College

Devotions

"A Study in Mennonite Family Trends in Elkhart County, Indiana"

Howard Good, St. Jacobs, Ontario

"The Life Cycle of Mennonite Families in Marion County, Kansas"

I. G. Neufeld, Tabor College

"Methods of Acquiring Home Ownership"

Howard Raid, Ames, Iowa

*Saturday afternoon, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.*

Chairman: John Mosemann, Goshen College

"Recreation in the Home"

Glen R. Miller, Goshen College

"Religion in the Home"

Ernest Bohn, Bluffton College

"An Ideal Pattern for a Christian Home Today"

Alta E. Erb, Scottdale, Pennsylvania

"Summary Statement of the Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems 1947"

Carl F. Smucker, Bluffton College

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## FOREWORD

The Sixth Annual Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems was held on the campus of Goshen College at Goshen, Indiana. Because of the success of previous conferences which had been devoted largely to a single subject or theme, the 1947 conference concerned itself entirely with the cultural problems of Mennonite home life. The Educational Sessions of the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges were also integrated into this single theme, and several papers were presented which represented the work of Mennonite women scholars on problems of Mennonite home life.

The Mennonite Cultural Conference is now an accepted feature of inter-Mennonite collegiate cooperation. An interesting program was prepared for the summer of 1948 at Tabor College but because of the Mennonite World Conference scheduled for August 1948 it was decided to omit the Cultural Conference during the year 1948 and to postpone the program prepared for that time until the summer of 1949. The attendance at the Goshen Conference in 1947 was smaller than at previous conferences. The fact that it was held during the same summer as general conferences by both the General Conference Mennonites and the (Old) Mennonites undoubtedly contributed to the smaller attendance. Even so, more than eighty individuals attended the conference from eight states in the United States from Virginia to California, from two provinces in Canada, and from the Netherlands. Considerable interest was expressed on the part of those who did attend, and it is hoped that the omission of an annual conference during the year of the World Conference will serve to stimulate interest in future sessions.

CARL KREIDER





# Home Economics in the Mennonite School

By Olive G. Wyse

In recent years there has been widespread discussion of the purposes of higher education and the future of the liberal arts college. The year of the war's end, 1945, brought a crescendo of books and articles on the subject. The majority of these writings emphasize the need for education in value judgments.

Educators had been saying for some time that society had advanced technologically far more than it had progressed spiritually, socially, and ethically; but the serious aspects of this disparity were not driven home to many people until they began to fear the results of atomic power in the hands of unprincipled men. Technology can destroy our civilization or it can bring freedom from want to all men. Which it will do will depend upon the *kind* of men and women we shall have in the next generations. The task, therefore, before all agencies of Christian education is stupendous. Educational programs in home economics, as in other fields, must be designed to meet the challenges of this post-war era.

Since the home is the basic educational institution of our society, education which does not increase one's capacity to live harmoniously with others, which does not develop the skills, attitudes and understandings basic to stable family life, is not in the truest sense liberal education, nor is it Christian. Education in this atomic age, if it is built on sound foundations, must promote wholesome family life. Education for peaceful living is education in wholesome group relationships. The individual learns to develop his "I" and "We" relationships first in the family. Here, too, he should learn the meaning of freedom, co-operation, self-worth, self-expression, self-discipline, sacrifice, and love. Family life which exemplifies the love of Christ in all human relationships will build a more spiritual church, a wholesome community, and a better nation.

"Worthy home membership," one of the seven cardinal principles of education listed in text-books of education for a quarter of a century, has not been considered seriously by many of our educators. The Educational Policies Commission of the N.E.A. reported that only about fifteen per cent of the high school and college students of the country and probably less than five per cent of the parents engaged in any kind of systematic education for home and family life in 1938.<sup>1</sup> The Educational Policies Commission in its discussion of the purpose of education in American democracy makes a strong appeal for education for improved family relationships. The events since 1938 make education for home and family

1. Educational Policies Commission, *The Purposes of Education in American Democracy*, National Education Assoc. of the U. S. and the American Association of School Administrators. 1938. p. 89.

living still more imperative. The increasing divorce rate and juvenile delinquency indicate that all agencies of education should prepare men and women more effectively for the responsibilities of home and family living.

All fields of knowledge encountered in college may have significance for home and family living. The humanities as well as the social and natural sciences should make their contribution to the art of living in the home and the community. But home economics should be designed with special emphasis upon the skills, attitudes, and understandings which promote wholesome family living.

The first objective then of home economics in a Christian school should be to guide students in determining the values most worth striving for in personal and family living. Over 40 years ago, Ellen H. Richards, one of the founders of the home economics movement in our schools, said:

"Home economics stands for the freedom of the home from the dominance of things and their due subordination to ideals, and for the simplicity in material surroundings which will most free the spirit for the more important and permanent interests of the home and of society."<sup>2</sup> In a world sick from materialism we must constantly guard against the tendency to confuse "the possession of things with the possession of worth and to assume that the pursuit of things is the pursuit of happiness."<sup>3</sup> Time and labor-saving devices in the home are means of releasing time and energy for the promotion of the health, mental, social and spiritual development of each member of the family. When household furnishings and equipment become an end rather than a means to an end they are a hindrance to family health and happiness. For example, the mother who leaves her pre-school children in the care of others during a large part of their most crucial developmental period in order to earn more money to buy the children more things, may discover too late that money and things alone can not give the security every child needs in order to be happy and to develop his best talents. Moreover, the mother who is inclined to be so overzealous about housekeeping and having a house which outshines the neighbor's that the members of the family can not relax at home will find that her family will tend to stay at home as little as possible. They seek relaxation and companionship in other places.

In other words, if all aspects of housekeeping are not made to serve the best interest of each member of the family, housekeeping activities become ends in themselves. When the activities related to making a home are regarded as ways of promoting the health, happiness and optimum development of personalities,

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2. Justin, Margaret, "Freedom from the Dominance of Things." *Journal of Home Economics*. 38:396.

3. *Ibid.*



those activities which best achieve these goals are selected and those which militate against these goals are eliminated.

As Mennonites we have taken pride in our good *housekeeping*. On the whole, we have had good family life, but twenty years of experience with teen-age young people from various sections of the church leads me to feel that we may have a larger proportion of good housekeepers than of good *homemakers*.

The second objective of home economics in a Mennonite school should be to develop in students an appreciation of homemaking as a career which challenges the intellectual resources, managerial skills, and spiritual perceptions of an individual. Dr. James S. Plant, after years of experience in handling the problems of youth in a large juvenile clinic, said that one of the most alarming and disturbing factors in our American life is the "loss of dignity" in family life. Too many people see only the drudgery of housekeeping and do not see that homemaking may command the best ability and courage they possess. Dr. Plant said "Perhaps all one should ask of home economists is that they manage to show young people that the proper rearing of children for the democratic way of life demands more intelligence, resourcefulness, and devotion than does any other task."<sup>4</sup> Even in our circles we hear women say rather apologetically, "I'm just a homemaker." Men, too, infer that homemaking skills do not require a high grade of mental ability. Yet, is it not true that it requires as much intelligence, skill and devotion to create good human relationships and to guide children wisely in their development as to learn a profession? Many successful professional men and women have failed in the art of family living.

It is gratifying to learn that all of the Mennonite girls who have graduated from Goshen College with majors or minors in home economics during the eighteen years from 1928-1945 who are now married said in answer to a questionnaire sent out in 1945 that they considered homemaking a full-time job. Some of them worked outside of their homes to increase the family income for brief periods. Some were supporting husbands in Civilian Public Service at that time. However, all of them said that they did not want to carry on a career outside of homemaking. Practically all who have been married more than two years are mothers. The fact that those who have been married more than ten years have more children than the average married college graduate in the nation is also indicative of their attitude toward the values of family life. The sixteen who have been married for ten or more years have 49 children of their own now living, seven foster children, and three step children, an average of 3.68 children per family.

4. Plant, James S., "Democracy Turns to the Family." *Journal of Home Economics*, 34:105, January, 1942.



The third objective of home economics in the Mennonite School is related to meeting the needs of all students, men and women. A study of enrollments in home economics and family courses in Goshen College during a period of 18 years revealed the fact that the majority of students receive very little family life education in the first two years. Only 36 women out of 200 who discontinued their college work between 1931 and 1941 had taken any work in home economics. One-fourth of the women four-year graduates have had no work in home economics or the family. The proportion of men who take the family course is still smaller, for only 170 men were enrolled in the course throughout the 19 years when enrollments were analyzed, an average of less than nine per year. The majority of our students, men and women, regardless of their major, will spend a large percentage of their time and money on problems related to food, clothing, shelter, and family relations. If we are going to give a well-rounded general education program in our colleges, home economics can not be treated as a field of specialization for a few students who wish to find a professional money-making career in the field. Home economics contributes uniquely to the goals of education in a Christian college, for in addition to its emphasis upon values, the development of wholesome personality, and the broadening and enriching of life, it is concerned with developing skills, attitudes, and understanding which are useful in home and family living. These understandings and skills should strengthen not only personal and family relations but also life in the larger community. Therefore, one of the major courses in the general education curriculum should challenge students to apply the skills of science, the insights of human psychology, the understandings of economics and social science, and the ideals of Christian ethics to the solution of the social and economic problems of the home and community. The work of the course should lead students to have a better understanding of the basic functions of the home and family, the factors which influence stable family living in rural and urban communities, and the attitudes and skills essential for successful family living. At the present time, Goshen College is considering the introduction of an eight-hour course oriented to the central theme, Home and Community Living. It would integrate certain features of the present courses in American Government, Social Problems, Principles of Economics, The Family, Child Welfare, and Home Management.

If all students, both men and women, take the course in Home and Community Living, they should receive some of the basic understandings in home and family relations and should be challenged to recognize the areas in which they need further preparation. Therefore, it seems advisable to open courses to them in the areas in which they have special need for development of skills and

understandings. The arrangement of offering several courses at the freshman and sophomore levels from which students may select according to their background experience and present or future needs seems advisable because students come to college with wide differences in achievement in the field of home economics. Some girls have had four years of vocational home economics in high school and several years of experience in 4-H Club work. Some have had a great deal of practical experience in their own homes while others have had practically no opportunity to develop homemaking skills. If home economics is to serve its highest purposes in the college, it should be prepared to help meet the needs of as many students as possible, irrespective of their major field. In addition to the proposed Home and Community Living courses in general education, Goshen College is planning to offer a three-semester hour course in Elementary Nutrition and a three-semester hour course in Principles of Food Preparation to meet the needs of students in the collegiate school of nursing and in the elementary education curriculum. A two-hour course in Clothing Selection has been offered for a number of years as a service course for non-majors as well as majors.

A fourth major objective of home economics at the college level is the development of skills and abilities in homemaking activities. When home economics alumnae of Goshen College were asked to list the needs for information, skills, and understandings which they thought their college education should have provided and did not, they responded with a great variety of suggestions. The recent graduates were the ones who felt the need for more practical skills in homemaking. It may be that they feel their inadequacies in skills because they have not had the practice since college as the older graduates have had. Some suggested that they did not have enough skill when they came to college to profit by the relatively small amount of time allowed for developing skills in laboratory courses. It is true that laboratory work in foods and clothing has been curtailed in recent years in order to include more work in home management, family, home nursing and child welfare. The older graduates expressed a need for more cultural and social emphases and for courses in home nursing, home management, and consumer education. None who have graduated in the last seven years expressed a desire for more opportunity to develop the social amenities as the older graduates had. Their chief cry seems to be for more practice, learning to do by doing. Education for home and family living cuts across so many areas of knowledge that the problem of selecting values, understandings, appreciations, and skills which should be the major objectives of the department of Home Economics at the college level, is decidedly complicated. The second major problem is that of determining how these objectives can be achieved.



A fifth major objective of home economics is to enrich the educational experiences of those students who have chosen home economics as their major field so that they may be prepared to meet the demands of their professional interests. A small liberal arts college can not prepare for all vocations in the field of home economics, but it can give the basic background courses for various fields of specialization. The majority of the girls majoring in home economics will devote the larger part of their life to family living and therefore regardless of the vocation they follow for a few years, they need a broad rather than narrowing educational program. When the alumnae were asked what they would select for their college program if they could choose in the light of their experience since in college, approximately half said that they would select more work in child care and development, Bible, philosophy and ethics, art, foods, and nutrition. Almost two-thirds of the homemakers expressed a desire for more work in child development and Bible while only 41% of the single women indicated a desire for more work in these areas. 60% of the single women and 37% of the married women said that they would have profited by having more art and music. The majority were satisfied with the amount of science they had. This is in contrast to the results obtained by the study of reactions to curriculum by home economics alumnae of land-grant colleges. Over half of the replies from graduates of three institutions were in favor of less chemistry and physiology. These institutions usually have a higher science requirement than Goshen has.

When we build educational programs for students we must consider the needs of our times and the needs of students after they leave college, as well as the needs the student recognizes at the moment. It was interesting to observe that many of the alumnae after they were out of college wished they had taken some courses in college which had been suggested to them, but which at the time they were in college they felt they did not want or need. If we are going to guide students wisely we must discover student abilities early in their college program so that they may select those educational experiences which provide the full-orbed development which we covet for them.

Finally the program of home economics in any school should contribute to the basic goals of the particular institution which offers the program. In a Mennonite school the home economics program should be keyed into the needs of the church. Regardless of the branch of Mennonites our particular school represents, we should permeate our teaching with the major emphases of the founding fathers. The concept that the essence of Christianity is discipleship, the transforming and fashioning the whole of life of the believer after Christ, should be the guiding principle in determining the values most worth striving for in personal and family

living. This concept of discipleship will be expressed in our use of time, energy, and material resources as well as in our human relationships. The principle of brotherhood, of sharing possessions in the spirit of true mutual aid, can be practiced in all group relationships.

The third great element in the Anabaptist vision, the ethic of love and non-resistance, should be applied to all human relationships. If the teachers of home economics in our Mennonite schools do not accept these principles of discipleship, Christian brotherhood and love, they can not in the highest sense uphold the objectives of home economics as outlined in this paper. When these principles are the basic guides in the development of curricula, in the selection of educational experiences, and in the provision of the educational equipment or environment, we shall have a dynamic program pointed to the goal of helping individuals live more harmonious, meaningful and useful lives in the home, the church, the community, in short, in the extension of the Kingdom of our Lord.



## Kingdom Service in the Home

By

Mrs. Eva Harshbarger

In discussing this question, the writer has taken much for granted—that her listeners are cognizant of the needs, and share the Christian ideals, regarding the place of the Kingdom in the home. She has, therefore, not attempted a comprehensive treatment but proffers, rather, a suggestive one—limiting herself to various phases of particular interest to those of our peculiar heritage—as seen from a woman's viewpoint.

The Mennonites are a marrying people. This rather obvious statement is borne out by a study of the Who's Who of 1940. Of the more than 950 men listed at that time only 24 were unmarried; at least 6 or 7 of these have rectified their failing since that time. Mennonites also believe in having children, a fact borne out by the above study as well as by common observation. The typical attitude is reflected in the remark of a Mennonite woman who said: "I would rather have twelve children than one piece of a dog." Childless couples have adopted children in order to fit into the pattern of their contemporaries. Among Mennonites there is a strong feeling toward the woman-in-the-home and the man-in-public-life pattern of life. Just how did this come about? A brief history of man-woman relations seems fitting at this point.

First of all, it must be remembered that Mennonites are sharers in the cultural heritage of all peoples. The savage man, being the stronger, more aggressive of the two sexes, could choose for himself the exciting thrill of the chase—leaving the more mundane and tedious tasks to the women. Furthermore, the woman's biological functions as child-bearer and child feeder limited her to the role of keeper-of-the-fire. Practically all religions have sacralized this division of roles, from the Oriental religions, in which women were little more than slaves, important only in the propagation of the race, to the Christian religion under which women have both been cursed and blessed.

To Jesus, women owe a peculiar gratitude. His emphasis on the value of personality, regardless of sex, color, or condition of servitude, had a profound effect on woman's status. The strictness of his attitude toward divorce gave women more security, for it was she who had suffered under the old divorce law. Jesus' friendliness, tolerance, and understanding kindness even toward women sexual offenders is told in various instances: Luke 7:36-50; 8:2; John 4:6-26; 9:1-11; It would seem that woman was prescient of her debt to Jesus, for as Unruh has pointed out in the Mennonite Lexicon, no woman appears as the enemy of Jesus—Pilate's wife took Jesus' side (Matt. 27-19).

Unfortunately for women, there were several conditions in the early church which militated against their acceptance as equals.<sup>1</sup>

It is in the Corinthian correspondence in particular, that Paul speaks of marriage as doubtful concession to man's weakness. Corinth was a sailor's city—with all that the name implies in the way of sex looseness. In addition, licentiousness was part of the recognized service of the goddess Diana whose temple was the most conspicuous in Corinth. With all this lasciviousness as a background, with the feeling of freedom which was engendered in a grace movement, it is understandable that the Corinthian Church passionately defended a member who lived with his father's wife because his act symbolized to them the individual emancipation of a Christian. The above incident is clarified, too, by remembering that early Christianity was an eschatological or crisis movement in which ties are thought to be very temporary. The feeling of impermanence thus engendered would have much of the psychological impact of war, in that ordinary family ties and duties are attenuated. Taking all these things into consideration and in addition, when one reads of the horrible acts of which the early Christians were accused, especially regarding their love feasts—it is no wonder the early church fathers "leaned over backward," so to speak, in warning the women of the church to be circumspect in all areas.

Another powerful influence on the place of women in the Kingdom was the fact that Jesus and Paul were both celibate. It is natural for followers to imitate and attempt to follow. Too, some of the early Christian leaders such as Tertullian were decided misogynists. He expressed his venom toward women thus: "The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age. You are the devil's gateway. You destroy God's image Man." The Worship of Mary as a *Virgin* may have been an additional factor in accentuating the suspicion and reaction against sex. If against sex, then against its representative—women. Certainly all of these influences contributed directly to the rise of monasticism with its ideal of celibacy and to chivalry with its very strong ambivalence toward women, in which we find idealization and worship on one hand—sensual enjoyment and debauchery on the other. This dichotomy of feeling is illustrated by the following statement made by a medieval writer: "Woman—man's confounder, mad beast, stinking rose, sad paradise, sweet venom, luscious sin, bitter sweet."

To all these diverse strains of culture and influences, the anabaptists fell heir. To them must be added another. In the old Germanic families, the head of the family could punish or even kill his wife. In the light of all these facts, it is perhaps to be

1. Rockwell Smith, "Hebrew, Greco-Roman, and Early Christian Family Patterns," *Marriage and the Family*, ed. by Howard Becker and Reuben Hill (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1942), p. 68.



marveled at that the Confession of Dort was "mild" as compared to the Pauline writings. Note that Eve is not singled out as scape-goat. The account in the confession runs as follows:—

He created the first man, Adam, and father of all of us, gave him a body formed "of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" so that he became a living soul created by God in His own image....gave him a place above all creatures....put him in the Garden of Eden....

Thereupon he took a rib from the side of Adam, made a woman out of it, brought her to him, and gave her to him as a helpmeet and housewife....Adam and Eve did not long remain in this happy state....We also confess that there is in the Church of God an "honorable" state of matrimony between two believers of the different sexes as God first instituted the same....and as the Lord Jesus reformed it by removing all abuses which had crept into it, and restoring it to its first order.

(Gen. 1:27, 2:18, 22, 24.)

....the apostle Paul also taught and permitted matrimony in the Church, leaving it to each one's choice to enter into matrimony with any person who would unite with him in such a state, provided it was done 'in the Lord'....to be understood according to our opinion, that just as the patriarchs had to marry amongst their own kindred or generation, so there is no other liberty allowed to believers under the N. T. Dispensation than to marry amongst the 'chosen generation'....to such—and none others—as already, previous to their marriage, united to the church in heart and soul, have received the same baptism, belong to the same faith and doctrine and lead the same course of life with themselves.

(Cor. 7; 9:5; Gen. 24:4, 28:6; Numbers 36:9.)

We find, then, in the thinking of present day members of the Kingdom a curious mixture—a strong ambivalence, a reverence yet suspicion of women—an attraction to, yet a fear of earthly love, a desire for the solace of wife, home and family, yet a lurking fear that earthly joys may be valued above loyalty to one's Master.

Much time has been spent on this seemingly introductory material in this paper because a recognition of this ambivalence and an understanding of its cause and its possible effects is essential before man can welcome woman and woman can enter into full participation in the work of the Kingdom.

Between the Kingdom and the home there exists a unique and indissoluble interdependence. "Between family life and religion there is a constant and never ceasing interaction; both are at one and the same time benefactor and benefited."<sup>2</sup> In describing God and our relations to man a *family metaphor* is used. "God is our Father, men are His children, all men constitute the family of God and are brothers one to another."<sup>3</sup> How important then to the Kingdom it is for the child to be a part of a just, kind, loving family. His concept of God and his attitudes toward humanity are based so directly on his early experience in the family.

The ideals of the *Kingdom* contribute to the *home* in that they help to foster the flexible type of character which is able to make the adjustments necessary to cooperative living. Rockwell Smith

2. Smith, *op. cit.*

3. *Ibid.*

says, "Central to the religious ideal is the teaching of the importance of humility." The Beatitudes call blessings on the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and pronounce blessings on persons whose only possession is their knowledge of their own need, their will to seek and to make an adjustment. It is the ability to give (that really Christian virtue) that makes a happy home.<sup>4</sup>

The stability which the Church contributes to the home is recognized by Terman and by Burgess and Cottrell in their famous studies. The latter, in their marriage prediction scale give a high rating to regular church attenders and to those who attended Sunday School until nineteen or more years of age. Burgess and Cottrell emphasize the importance of similarity of religious backgrounds, giving a top score of 20 to "both parents same" and zero to "different."

The relation of broken homes to religion is startling. Only 4.6 per cent of Jewish, 6.4 per cent Catholic, and 6.8 per cent of Protestant homes are broken up by divorce, whereas 15.2 per cent of mixed marriages and 16.7 per cent of those without religious affiliation are broken.

A further insight into the effect of religion in the home is revealed by a study of *Who's Who*, in *The Builders of America* by Ellsworth Huntington and Leon Whiting. For every twenty clergy-men in this country, one clergy-man's son is listed, whereas the proportion for other professions is forty-six to one, for skilled labor 1600 to one; for unskilled labor 48,000 to one.

Religion should be taught in the home if for no other reason than that it is a part of our contemporary heritage. No person can be truly educated without some knowledge of the concepts of theology and some appreciation of our wonderful religious literature. This, of course, is a far cry from learning to experience the glory and power of a living faith.

It has been said that many people take their children to the circus but send them to church. This you may truly say, is not a Mennonite failing. It has been observed, however, that the secularization that accompanies urbanization has been affecting observance of religion even in Mennonite families. In a study made by the writer, the effect of urbanization on the continuance of the family altar was quite noticeable in that it was the city families who had discontinued family worship.

The stability of the home may be affected by religion in manners not so easily discernible. Duvall and Hill<sup>5</sup> say that an influential factor in the enduring marriage is entrance with the expectation of success. The result is likely to be a really serious effort to "make things go." In fact, Bernard says that many a

4. Jessie Bernard, *American Family Behavior* (New York: Harper & Bro., 1942) p. 408.

5. Evelyn Duvall and Reuben Hill, *When You Marry* (Boston: Heath, 1945).



woman has made a satisfactory adjustment to an initially unsatisfactory marriage because her religion said she must. By obviating the strain of choice, there is achieved a certain serenity which contributes directly to the peace of the home.

This same truth—that strong institutional patterns cut down the *areas* of choice and consequently the *strain* of choice may explain the serenity with which a Mennonite woman accepts home-making as her "career." Her church clearly defines her role and surrounds it with "social oughts," adding the weight of its authority to its teaching. Baber says in effect, that if social approval is greatest for the "home major, outside-minor pattern, women find satisfaction instead of frustration in conforming to it."<sup>6</sup>

The church counts the home as its strongest ally. The church depends upon the home for instilling habits of piety and conduct as well as knowledge and appreciation of the lasting values of the Kingdom. It is well, then, for the parent to have thought through his own beliefs. For in their transmission another value comes into question, that is, honesty. Recently, the writer asked her class to interpret the following poem which had just appeared in a popular magazine:

#### Faith

by Elizabeth Ellen Long

Because I lost such faith long years ago  
 And know what it is like to go without,  
 I swear that these, my children, I love so  
 Shall never learn from me one word of doubt.  
 Each tale of miracles I'll tell again  
 Exactly as it was once told to me,  
 And resurrect old prophets who have lain  
 Buried since I was young, in heresy.  
 Belief in good I'll give them, such as I  
 Once had, and tell them God hears those who pray;  
 I'll teach them they need never fear to die,  
 Since Heaven waits for all of us someday.  
 Better they trust in something and be wrong  
 Than never to feel safe their whole lives long.

The writer of this paper is glad to report that, almost to a man, the class detected the rationalization, the frantic search for and a almost slavish worship of security, revealed in the poem. They rejected the poem because of its intellectual and spiritual dishonesty. But what are we, as adults, actually practicing in this respect? Are we, perhaps, teaching dogmas and creeds which we ourselves doubt? In addition, what other patterns of honesty are the parents setting? Do they instruct Johnny to tell the unwelcome visitor they are not at home? Do they "forget" how old Johnny is when a question of train fare is involved?

6. Ray E. Baber, *Marriage and the Family* (McGraw-Hill Book Co.), p. 431.

Another virtue that the Kingdom expects the family to instill is *love*. One of the basic needs of the human is to find response in some other human. It has been demonstrated that children in institutions may languish and even die for lack of love. One of the little European orphans mourned: "I ain't nobody's nothing." A noted New York pediatrician is reported to be placing on the charts of children in his hospital: "This child is to be taken up and loved for twenty minutes (or thirty as the case may be) every day." Many illustrations may be given. What is more to the point is that, in the opinion of the writer, many Mennonite children suffer from a lack of demonstrated love in spite of the inclusion of love as an important part of the Mennonite creed. Time after time, the autobiographies of students reveal a basic insecurity, a lack of assurance as to his or her place in the world. These students are not degenerate products of broken, unstable homes but are honor students from good Mennonite families. It is true that in some cases this feeling is directly traceable to the consciousness of being different from non-Mennonite playmates. One girl, for instance, remarked: "I'll never make children of mine wear black stockings." But, by and large, much of it can be traced to lack of demonstrated affection and appreciation in the home. Visualize, for instance, a rather typical happening: When Mary comes home with a tale of childish achievement, what is likely to be her reception? Do her parents say enthusiastically—"That's wonderful, Mary! We know you have it in you."? Or is she more likely to be met with a dissertation on the sin of pride or at most a grudging "Well just don't let it go to your head." We actually *pride* ourselves on the uncharitable habit of finding fault with, rather than praising the child. In the final analysis, if we subjected ourselves to honest self appraisal, we would find this attitude likely due to projection of our own hostilities, frustrations, and uncertainties.

The writer makes it a custom to ask her classes in Family Relationships if the students remember seeing their fathers and mothers kiss each other. About half the class usually report that they have not. How can a young child be sure that "mama loves papa and Johnny too" if it's never demonstrated?

If the reader needs further proof that Mennonite children often lack self-confidence, are self-conscious and self-deprecating, please visit almost any strange Mennonite community (one you can view objectively) and observe how many of the children and young people have a cowed, shy, and submissive appearance. This type of personality may be necessary for the continuance of a static church but is a static church really our ideal? It is true that many individuals have struggled for and achieved status partly in compensation for their inferiority feelings but this struggle often costs a terrific price and may leave a permanent personality scar.



Now in seeming contradiction to the above, we must recognize that perfect peace and amity cannot be achieved in the family for the simple reason that the Kingdom in its present state is earthbound and its citizens are at times quite "earthly." They have their predilections, their unexplainable dislikes, their hostilities which often have been carried over from the frustrations which accompany the socialization of childhood. Women, in particular have periods of nervous tension. The family must provide the security of a loving and understanding environment so that tensions of living and the hostilities, incident to socialization, may be released. Duvall and Hill recommend that families learn to quarrel constructively with emphasis on issues not on personalities, at the same time never losing sight of the value and the sacredness of each soul. This idea is shocking to many Mennonite young people—they have been taught to "shut up" and endure at all cost. The writer is not minimizing long-suffering and patience—they are saintly virtues—but it must be remembered that even Jesus and Paul had their moments of righteous indignation. Young people often find release when they learn that it is normal for the frustration of growing up to result in an ambivalent attitude to one's parents. Oddly enough, recognition of the normality of hostility often releases them from the power of it.

Love is the finest Christian attribute, but even it must be administered with discretion, particularly on the giving end. Some mothers have given and given until they are nothing but dried up apples and their children are nothing but exploiting brats. Children need to be taught the joy of being useful—of contributing to the worth-while work of the world. The child needs to be weaned in all areas—parents must remember that the goal of child guidance is self-guidance—or independence.

Another virtue which the Christian home needs to instill is courage. If the child attains a faith in the living God as an ever present help in trouble he will have the marvelous depth of resources which is one mark of the believing Christian. He will have courage for being poor, or for being rich, for loving or for losing, for living or for dying. He will know that the pain of having lost a loved one comes as a result of having known what love is. He will not expect protection from the common ills of mankind but will expect and receive strength to bear those ills. He will not say to himself smugly, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord, therefore since I love the Lord I will not have to suffer." Rather, he will recognize that through love for the Lord all difficulties may be transmuted into growth. So he will say, "To them that love the Lord—all things work together for good."

All these virtues need to be taught by precept but before a child understands words, he is noticing and responding to attitudes. A very young child can feel the hostility in the arms of a

rejecting mother. A facial expression, a shrug of the shoulders, the tone of voice carry messages more effectively than spoken words. The child is powerfully molded by and tends to imitate the attitudes of his parents. Someone has defined a small boy as one who follows in his father's footsteps in spite of all efforts to teach him otherwise. Our Johnny was once reprimanded for taking his pumpkin pie up in his fingers to eat it. He replied, "Well, that's the way Daddy does." The writer has been impressed, when reading student autobiographies, by the frequency with which boys revere and copy their fathers. It is remarkable too, how frequently the prejudices and hostilities of the parents are manifested in the children. In a certain study on prejudices, reported by Bernard, a group of Southern children insisted that their mothers told them not to play with negroes, while the parents denied any remembrance of such instruction. Suspiciousness, criticism, hostility towards neighbors and the world in general may be transmitted by seemingly devout and certainly righteous parents, to their children. Such people have been rightly named "carriers of mental ill-health."

What shall we teach our children is their *obligation* to the bigger world? In the study made by the writer on Mennonite women she discovered little real concern on their part as to what went on outside their own little circles. There was scarcely any vision as to the contributions Mennonite women could make. Their attitude reminds one of that portrayed in a recent cartoon. Two dowagers were evidently exchanging views over the tea cups as to how to attain peace of mind. Said one, "I just try not to think about anything that has to do with the world." A student who comes from a church which has contributed liberally to Foreign Relief reported that at least two of the women in his home church asked recently, "Just who is this Mr. U.N.R.R.A. anyway?"

It appears that the typical Mennonite woman lacks confidence in her ability to make any real contribution to a sick world outside the role assigned her as wife and mother. She agrees perhaps too wholeheartedly, with the statements made by Dr. Hertzler of *Horse and Buggy* fame, "The best contribution Mennonites can make is more Mennonites." As a consequence, she has a tendency to narrow her life to a point of ignorance of the ways of, as well as lack of concern for, other less fortunate children in God's Kingdom.

The world is an exceedingly complex place—much more complex than when you and I were children. How then, shall we be interpreters of it to our children? How can we teach them to love and trust their fellowmen and still teach them that there is evil in the world—much evil? One student expressed a similar thought forcefully, even though inelegantly, when he wrote, "Children should be taught that all people are bums—but nice bums."

Attitudes of the mother are of particular importance to the child. A mother is in close and almost constant contact with the child in its most impressionable years. She can "set" the child in many possible directions—towards a self-seeking, narrow, egotism in which he is concerned only with his own piety and is full of suspicions and hostility toward his fellow men; or she can "set" him toward an appreciation of God's universe and the beauties that God-inspired men have created. She can instil a determination in him that he too will be a contributing member of society. Womankind has both the opportunity and the gift for conserving human and spiritual resources—for building a sense of Christian worth in the child that he will never allow to be desecrated.

This recognition of the importance of the mother in the home does not minimize, in the least, the responsibilities and opportunities of the father. Man and wife are partners in the tremendous task of instilling in the child the honesty, the humility, the courage, the upright living, the love and other-centeredness which form the core of the ethical code of the Kingdom. Parents have the most challenging job in the world—that of being co-partners with God in the fascinating, yet dangerously responsible, task of molding human personality.



# Open Doors for Mennonite Women In Social Work

By Edna Ramseyer

Mennonite women have for centuries been rendering service to their fellow men. They have not been trained specifically for social service work according to present-day standards but because of their consecrated Christian living and deep love for Christ, have been moved to help those in need and have done it quite effectively.

Beginning as a free and spontaneous charity of neighbor to neighbor, social work has become a highly skilled profession involving not only innate sympathy for people in trouble but also an understanding of reasons for that trouble.

Christian social work of today draws its developing philosophy from psychiatry, religion, sociology, psychology, economics, and biology. Its general focus is the personality of the individual and his relationship to his God, his fellow man, and his environment. Its goal is the integration of the personality into a wholesome, happy and self-respecting Christian citizen.

Social work is as old as Christianity and finds its impetus in the Christian approach to people as free individuals, each of whom is of priceless worth to God. There are many Scriptural passages which can be given as the basis for this continued interest of Christian people to serve their fellow men and further the kingdom through Christian social work. (Matt. 4:23; 25:34-40; 22:37, 39.)

We as Christians believe that social work should have a religious motivation for it is the essence of our philosophy of education that no religious worker can serve as he should without a social vision nor can a social worker do all he is capable of doing without drawing upon religious resources.

We cherish the ideal "A cup of cold water in Christ's name" or an article of clothing "in the name of Christ" for to us it seems that it does make a difference whether that cup of water is offered in the name of Christ or in the name of a person or country. It might possibly provide an opportunity to bring a stranger to Christ or to open an avenue for a future missionary work or the establishing of a church.

The work that generally comes under the supervision of a social worker is as follows:

1. helping with family problems
2. placing and supervising children in foster homes and institutions
3. supervising and planning recreation for children, youth and adults

4. helping individual and family to carry out recommendations of doctor, psychiatrist and psychologist
5. planning for the health and welfare of the community

The person who is most successful at this work is one who has the qualities of maturity, emotional stability, personal and social adjustment, patience, tolerance, unselfishness, understanding, thoughtfulness, imagination, good humor, fine mental vigor and good health.

If the church, or we as women in the church, wish to do this Christian service of human engineering effectively, we will need to know and understand the scientific principles underlying human behavior and emotion and then apply these principles to people in specific situations through special techniques and skills.

Our colleges are aware of this problem to a certain extent and at present are providing more courses and experiences for training in the field of Christian social work. The churches and our Mennonite Central Committee has been providing summer and one year projects in various types of work which in addition to providing the opportunity for diligent study will also provide an opportunity for excellent training. More, however, could and should be done for the enthusiastic worker of the church interested in the area of social problems. She, too, should be given the opportunity of more specific training.

We, as Mennonite people have felt the call of frustrated humanity to a degree as well as the call to help alleviate human tension and spiritual confusion. We have seen the need to remove the cause of this social pressure. We have realized the need for testifying more widely to the gospel and its way of love and nonresistance.

The Mennonite Church has accepted many opportunities for service willingly and within the last several years has used thousands of her women in the homes, hundreds of her students and young people in areas of tension and need and hundreds of her women in foreign and home relief work.

There are many opportunities at present where willing hands and a ready heart and mind can serve. The woman at home who has her household responsibilities may be encouraged to can food, sew garments and give money for missions and the relief of suffering humanity. She may counsel with her neighbor and encourage her to become a part of a church group. She may visit the sick, the sorrowing, the person in prison, give aid to the poor and serve as a participant in solving community problems.

The woman at home is largely responsible for teaching her children the proper attitude of giving and of group relationships. She can acquaint the child early with the Mennonite Central Committee projects such as school bags, children's toys, and raising of foods for other children less fortunate than they.



The woman who wishes to give full time Christian service may train to be a nurse aid or a registered nurse and work in a hospital either under the jurisdiction of the church or some other agency. The new mental hospitals under the sponsorship of the Mennonite Central Committee will provide an additional avenue of service.

She may train to be a religious social worker and serve in our churches, where, incidently, much could be done, or work in a settlement house, children's home or old people's home. She may train in the field of dietetics, home economics, recreation, crafts, art, music and serve in her specific field in an area of concern or tension. She may prepare to go on the mission field where teachers, nurses, doctors, counselors are always needed whether it is for home or foreign missions. She may prepare to teach in Mennonite colleges or high schools. She may also teach in public schools and give her Christian witness there.

The girl of eighteen and above who is talented, courageous, and eager to serve but can give only a short part of the year or maybe one year in its entirety may become a part of the Voluntary Service Program which is sponsored by individual churches, by church conferences and by the Mennonite Central Committee. Some of the specific projects which are open for volunteers are summer Bible school and evangelistic work in areas of cultural, racial and economic tension in cities or mountain areas; sanitation and general rehabilitation services as worked out in Gulfport, Puerto Rico, Mexico and other places; recreational work as done with patients in the mental hospitals, especially at Pueblo, Colorado and with the children of the community as in Gulfport, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

For the person who can give more than a year, but not an entire life, varied relief opportunities throughout the entire world are provided. Whether trained in nursing, child care, nutrition, dietetics, counseling, social work, recreational work, she will be able to contribute and serve in Christian social service enterprise. At no time will she stay only in her specific field of training for experiences are always varied.

We as Mennonite women are confronted with all kinds of opportunities for Kingdom service. We are able to find something for a short or long period of time and in almost any varied area in which our specific training or talents are of definite help.

Several impressions are, however, rather noticeable when we observe our fields of Christian endeavor and consider our available personnel.

1. We need to have more adequately trained Christian women for specific areas of need such as Christian social work, Christian counseling, child care, and other areas.
2. We need to enlarge the vision and understanding of our Mennonite laity, as to the contribution of Christian soc-



ial work in our home church, community, nation and abroad.

3. We need to encourage more of our women previously trained to leave their present task and enter these important Christian services for our church and humanity.
4. We need to encourage our young girls to become a part of the voluntary services which our churches and the Mennonite Central Committee have so conscientiously provided.
5. We need to ask God for His continued guidance in the selection of worthwhile projects and personnel.

Today presents many challenging, purposeful opportunities for us as women and young girls. May God so work within our hearts and lives that we will not disappoint our church, our world and our Saviour. May we be so filled with the love that God has for us that we will not be able to resist the call for help of His people.

# The Voluntary Service Program

by Elmer Ediger

## I. Introduction and General Perspective on Voluntary Service

Voluntary Service is not a new idea. It is relatively new as a program organized to utilize a year or less of time young people and others have to contribute to the work of the church. Giving of blocks of time is intended to extend the service of the church beyond the home community and to new areas and types of service.

Voluntary Service is motivated by the Christian teachings that urge us to consecrate ourselves as a living sacrifice in reasonable service, to live so that we do good to all men, particularly those in unusual need, and to live so that we overcome evil with good. Basically it is an effort toward better discipleship; to do as Jesus would in this world of need and confusion. A growing consciousness of the suffering, the hopelessness, and the evil of a wartorn world has caused us to become more restless in our favored and comfortable situation. We cannot help but contrast the need with our abundance of spiritual and material blessings. The love of Christ constrains us to give ourselves to a greater service of love during peace as well as war time.

Our Christian young people are taught to give and to serve, yet so often the opportunity for challenging direct service is unavailable, or the field is uncharted, and a practical expression of love **fails to come to fruition**. It is the privilege of the church to connect this service potential with existing needs. To bring youth in experimental contact with eye-opening and soul-stirring needs and for an effective utilization of this offering of time and talent it has seemed desirable to begin developing a well balanced voluntary service program.

To give a perspective on voluntary service as a program, one should examine more thoroughly than this space will permit, the relation between this type of voluntary service and relief, civilian public service, the work camps of the Friends, the voluntary service system of the Mormons, and other experiences of the church.

Functionally, voluntary service is a direct outgrowth of CPS and relief. MCC summer service units began in 1943 when some young women of our constituency volunteered to render a service in mental hospitals parallel to what the young men were drafted to do. CPS Educational Director's Conference of 1945 was probably the first group to crystallize on paper recommendations for a one year voluntary service plan. This was motivated by service and experience values comparable to the best of CPS. Shortly prior to this Educational Conference, Gulfport, Miss. was opened as a CPS project. There was a feeling that Gulfport should be more than a public health unit; that it should be a "relief at home" project. Accordingly a few volunteers supplemented the work of

the CPS project, and the CPS men added voluntary services on their off time.

One must recognize also, however, that behind the CPS and relief stimuli were concepts from other church experiences. The Friends work camps were familiar to scattered individuals in our group. The work camp was a "handle" used to connect young people with the concrete problems and needs of the day. Work camps aimed to build friendship and understanding between peoples, races, economic classes. They gave students the experience of manual toil, and helped remove some of the seedbeds of conflict. Their contribution to our thinking has been the lesson it taught of going directly into areas of need and thereby testifying by means of work. Those who would visit Friends' work camps and our own units today would find many differences and yet certain similarities.

The Mormon ideal of voluntary service has been a challenging concept to many of us. Mormons are urged to give a year or two of their lives in service to the church. Often it is on an individual or two by two basis. Parents even assume financial responsibility for their children's year of service. The details of their program are only vaguely known to most of us and do merit further study. Their program has become an integrated part of their total church service and educational philosophy. As Mennonites we have a large concept of the way of faith, love and service, which also needs further implementation and integration into our whole pattern of education and service.

Brief reference has been made of the relation of voluntary service to CPS, relief, work camps, and Mormon Voluntary Service so that we may see voluntary service with a little perspective even though our program is very much an infant itself. In terms of spiritual discipline, combination of work, worship, fellowship one might even suggest a comparison of the voluntary service concept with some aspects of the monastic orders of the medieval days, the work of Francis of Assisi and the like.

#### PRESENT VOLUNTARY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

To further consider voluntary service we should outline the present opportunities within and outside of our constituencies. Programs have been initiated by several of the individual groups of the MCC constituency.

The "Old" Mennonite Conference has had a program of Mennonite service units for several successive summers. This year they had approximately 50 summer workers attached in small groups to mission projects and children's homes such as those at Culp, Ark., and in Chicago. In general it is a program of Bible teaching, home visitation, surveys, and helpful maintenance service.

The General Conference Mennonite Voluntary Service Program this year had about 35 young people giving their summer in established city missions, an Indian Reservation, a Canadian Menno-



nite Youth Center, and traveling Mennonite Youth Team which aided local congregations.

The MCC has a program of short term and one year service. It had a summer program of 92 volunteers serving two mental hospitals, a village for epileptics, a health and recreational program in Gulfport, Mississippi and in Mexico, and Akron headquarters. The one year program has about 20 volunteers serving mainly at Gulfport, Miss., and in Mexico. There will be opportunity for one year volunteers in a state hospital and at the new MCC mental hospital.

In other denominational programs there are similar and different patterns of service. Friends and Brethren continue with the work camp and institutional units. Friends have initiated a student-in-industry plan and high school age work camps. Brethren have used considerable help at their relief centers. Methodists and Presbyterians have hundreds in youth caravans. There are a few year-around institutional units but very few of the denominations have one year service units comparable to our Gulfport service. Thus today youth service projects are a trend that follow in the church pattern of development from no Sunday Schools to Sunday Schools to young people's meetings, to summer conference camps, to service projects. The last step helps translate the ideals taught into action and life. Youth service has become a growing movement.

#### ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF ONE YEAR TERM VOLUNTARY SERVICE

For practical purposes this evaluation of longer term service is based largely on one year of experience in the Gulfport, Miss. type of situation. Actually summer service has affected a much larger number than the one year type of service program. It may be presumptuous to concentrate this analysis and evaluation so largely on this smaller aspect, but brevity of time for preparation of this paper was a major factor in suggesting this limitation. What is said actually applies in principle to Summer Service, but varies in degree.

In order that the evaluation might include thinking of others acquainted with voluntary service, a brief subjective questionnaire was sent to twelve men and women. The twelve represented four different MCC constituent groups and one Methodist. Among the twelve were six college teachers, four ex-Civilian Public Service men and one year voluntary service workers. Four major questions with additional sub-questions were asked: Should voluntary service be a part of the total Mennonite program? What should be the major aims and guiding principle within a Gulfport type of project planning? What is the greatest educational value of such service? Would it be valid educationally for a student to give a year of service before graduating from college? In this presentation we shall try to summarize the thinking on these points.



Should voluntary service be a part of our total Mennonite program? Why?

The answer to this first question was a unanimous and clear-cut "yes". Why? Roughly the answer can be grouped under three points: Because it meets unmet vital human needs in a Christian way. One of our church school sociology teachers experienced in social welfare work says, "It serves a vital need. . . . this service to the people of the South is one of the most worthwhile projects I have yet seen. It is well balanced, efficiently administered and all done *In The Name of Christ*. It is service at home; that is, in our own land where needs are sometimes as great as in foreign lands. These people are real people searching for a way of life. They have not found the Christ way and we can bring it to them. They are problems in themselves, but with God to help they are also the answer to problems."

One who has worked in this field for a year indicates that the all too usual evangelism in that community and elsewhere is limited to the spoken word without a follow up that helps to apply the Christian way to "real honest-to-goodness life problems." This follow up can be done in part by demonstration and partially by direct assistance.

A second type of reason is given as to "why such a program" is of experience value for the individual who serves. This will be explained further in the question on "greatest educational value". This experience value is important. Although most of us have a strong loyalty to our family pattern and our church schools, and although we have a real appreciation for their contribution, we can not be satisfied with present means of teaching Christian living. Particularly is this true if we have had experience with CPS life, or are realistic about how far short we fall in our home churches in doing the things we preach about service, peace, and missions. We would not want to be naive in assuming that voluntary service has the answer, but there must be effective ways of teaching that Christianity is more than lip service. We believe voluntary service through "experience under good leadership" may have a unique contribution to make to our pattern of religious education. We believe our lay group may be helped to a more aggressive Christian life and a better integration of ideals and living.

In addition to the meeting of human needs, the personal experience value, the third type of answer was that it provides a needed channel for Christian service. As one worker pointed out there is a wealth of consecration in Mennonite youth which may be lost in a large measure for lack of opportunity to give of self. A college registrar says—"Voluntary Service should be participated in by the rank and file. . . not just the college students, or those with missionary convictions or special interest in 'religion' as a vocation." Another college teacher writes "We have always talked much about the value of giving self, but we never had a program

within the church that provided for giving of self the way we have for giving of our substance. The Voluntary Service program provides this means of giving self." And I would say that for the Mennonite groups to contribute to the world the truth of their Christian faith, we need to experiment to find supplementary avenues. This would be in addition to the mission pattern, the formal schools, the witness value of our communities, and the limited individual contacts of our members.

The second of the four major questions asked was,--What should be our major aims and guiding principles in determining which specific projects to undertake in the Gulfport, Miss., type of situation where one year volunteers are used? In a broad sense our major aim is to "meet unmet human needs" in response to the love of God, the love of Christ, and as an expression of our Christian love for those in need. In emergency war relief the greatest needs are usually more obvious so that the nature of the program is more easily defined. Where there is long standing need, when there are so many human needs, when there are established agencies to deal with some of these, what should we try to accomplish in a given area such as Gulfport and how?

One of our college teachers says, "Our major aim and guiding principle should always be the spiritual enrichment of the people we serve". Another thinks of this larger purpose as a "spiritual revitalization program". A college registrar says, "Projects should first of all look to human needs and try to meet them with facilities available...If the need is for relief it should be met where possible; if long range rehabilitation, this should be undertaken as personnel and facilities permit. The validity of voluntary service as a Christian witness lies in the absolute sincerity of service for its own sake, and in the sincerity of the individual and in this spirit of unselfish love."

The group is quite well agreed that the ultimate effect should be that of spiritual revitalization. Although this is suggested as the major aim, the group is also agreed that voluntary service should make a unique and valid contribution to this aim by simply loving the people, by helping them to meet some of their unmet human needs "in the name of Christ". A principle suggested is that of 4/5 work, 1/5 words. Although situations will vary, that does suggest clearly that the Gulfport type of service is intended to be more a demonstration of Christianity than a preaching of it. It is a proving of the sincerity of our love (II Cor. 8:8) and a proving of that perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2). To make such a service "in the name of Christ" and "to the glory of God" some "words" are essential. If the basic desire for spiritually enriching the people is present, then 1/5 will become a natural part of the total. This can be either through informal contacts or through organized Christian teaching.

Such a pattern of Christian service and witness is not intended



to replace missions where a major portion of the energy may be directed to win new Christians. Such an MCC-VS is a pattern that can utilize a larger number of young people and is a pattern that can make a much needed Christian testimony in relatively well churching areas as well as others. So much so called Christianity today is saltless, empty lip service rather than Christian love in "deed and truth". This program should be a living testimony to Christ.

In the above we have a suggestion that a guiding principle for MCC-VS is that of giving the major portion of time to service and testimony in deeds rather than direct religious teaching. In the practical situation such as Gulfport, the leaders further need guiding principles within the area of the service through work. Meeting human needs in an area such as Gulfport could range from direct relief to long term rehabilitation. The many factors that help to determine which course of action is taken should perhaps be considered in somewhat the following order. First, what is best for the people involved? Second, what type of personnel is available? Third, how long a time should contributions be made to this particular area? Fourth, which type of work has the greatest Christian witness value? Fifth, which type of work has the experience value the volunteers want and should have? These questions clearly suggest that there can not be a hard and fast rule but there is room for a suggested order of priority with the factors named.

There is agreement among those questioned that only on rare occasions should they dispense relief in cash or kind. Also whatever is done, even though of a temporary alleviating nature, must not be contrary to good principles of rehabilitation. Most would agree that in any case urgent needs of food, clothing, housing should be met in some way if possible. Beyond this point it is difficult to generalize on what the group would agree. There is some clear cut disagreement--a group discussion of those questioned might show more agreement and certainly reveal principles on which all would agree. In view of the differences I shall try to present my own views which coincide with a considerable number of those questioned. In a Gulfport type of community there are two major types of work: (1.) repair of leaking roofs and tumbling shacks, and (2.) long range problem of ridding the community of hookworm. It would seem to me that we need a combination of meeting immediate needs and making contributions to the improvement of basic health, social, or economic problem of the community. Following are some of the principles largely gathered from those questioned which it seems to me should be guides.

A unit should concentrate its efforts reasonably within certain types of need and within a given geographical area. Scattering workers over several communities in various types of work requires more trained personnel than we would usually have.

Also it does not have accumulative effect from a Christian witness point of view. Most important, it seems to me, is concentrating geographically. This will be most effective where communities have a center in economic, social and religious activities. Instead of covering Harrison County in Mississippi, we should concentrate on several small communities in the Gulfport area.

To begin service in a community it is necessary to begin on a community, rather than on a family or an individual basis, until the unit has won the confidence of the community. It is easier to begin a community project which is preventive rather than correctional. One of the V. S. unit directors believes further that "work directed towards development of human personality, especially in youth in whom the greatest responsibility lies, should have priority over handling cases of disorganization."

From the very beginning and increasingly there should be concern and assistance to families and individuals in need. As a former social welfare worker says these should be entitled "Service to Individuals". On one hand, the contribution is of an alleviating nature, on the other it offers one of the best opportunities for spiritual enrichment of individual lives. In the past we have perhaps erred somewhat in doing too much "for" rather than "with" those in need. In this area would come home nursing, assistance in home management, house repair, and home devotionals. This type of work can utilize relatively untrained personnel in short term projects. This type of work is that which most workers want; it has a certain appeal. Further, a social welfare teacher says, "We should do house repair and cleaning because no one else does this or has a legal responsibility to perform such a service".

Personally I believe we should aim at a predominant mass problem--such as poor medical facilities, poor sanitation, low educational standards, bad housing, poor means of earning a living, poor agricultural methods, suffering by a minority group, juvenile delinquency, or poor religious education. To be effective community projects, there must be concentration upon one or several of these areas rather than dipping into each one. On such mass problems the most a unit can hope to accomplish is to point up the need and demonstrate steps toward solution, so the job can be turned over to the community. Thus, for example, the hookworm control program has pointed up the problem and demonstrated a possible solution. The nurses have helped establish better nursing standards in the local hospital. In the same way, the recreational program has begun to point up the need for equipment and program, and has shown ways of solving its short-comings. This should be followed up, rather than entering new fields.

Areas of a more rehabilitative nature should have specific projects that can be completed within the worker's period of service. Many of these community projects will enable regular use of



untrained personnel. However such projects do definitely need some trained leaders, preferably such as can stay more than one term. In general, to keep our testimony clear, it will be best to have MCC directed projects rather than loaning workers to other agencies.

In summary of this second major question it is my conviction that in a Gulfport situation our ultimate aim should be to bring about spiritual revitalization. We should serve out of love rather than only for propagandizing value; we should focus upon several small communities for a concentrated program; but we should also have periodic long range community projects which we initiate and demonstrate, then turn over to a local agency if possible.

What is the greatest educational value of such service? The values suggested can be classified under several headings: First, it is an experience that deepens the individual spiritually and matures him mentally and socially. A college teacher, former CPS camp director, says it is, "Training in practical Christian living of the spirit of love, not too closely tied to the stereotyped 'religious' concept of love as a religious feeling divorced from action". It is an experience of "self-giving" as compared with the continual striving for financial security and intellectual recognition. One worker says, "The greatest value... is that of putting into practice ideals he has had and only thought rather than practiced." To others it presents new ideals.

A Methodist worker says, "I believe that for the Mennonite young people, many of whom have lived in Mennonite communities all their lives, one of the greatest educational values is that of becoming aware of people as they live in this world—a world of professing Christians with widely different ideas of Christian standards and values."

A college teacher writes, "Being away from home and from intimate acquaintances would tend to develop appreciation for things to which one has always been very near... It helps build a sense of confidence, it gives students who have been sheltered at home a sense of self-reliance and courage to tackle new situations which is commendable".

In addition to a maturing type of experience, it is a laboratory of human-relations. A college teacher says, "The greatest educational value is in the personal contact with *people*. An awareness of people's needs is the first step in trying to help them. From there you organize your program. This project can be a laboratory in the study of human relations. It takes the problems out of a text book atmosphere and places it in the human flesh where it is real."

A former social worker, C.P.S. man, and now business man, writes, "The educational value of such service is in forcefulness of teaching group living".

In summary, it is my conviction that voluntary service can be a valuable internship experience for many non-college and college young people, an internship in finding a purer service motivation, a more effective type of lay witness, and a greater sense of responsibility to the church and individual Christian task.

On what basis would it be valid for a student to spend a year in such service before graduating from college? If it is concluded that some of the interested college and non-college type of young people might well be encouraged to give a year of service to the church, then the question logically arises, "When for a college student?"

The answers were not unanimous. The answers represent the opinions of those acquainted and interested in the program. Only two of the group questioned the validity of taking out a year from college for such service. One of these two had no general recommendation to suggest. As an ex-CPS man he recalled how hard it was to get back into the routine of education after some time off for CPS.

The other, a college teacher much in favor of the voluntary service says, "As a teacher I would not advise a student to spend a year in the service before he graduates from college. Only in case of dire emergency should this be done. The laws of learning are against it. As long as we have the four-year course I think it best to keep going. Summer service is ideal, then after college a year or more could be given".

Assuming that the student was interested, and that taking out a year would not cause him to miss definitely needed courses, the others heartily recommended such service possibly before graduation. A seminary graduate, Volunteer Service director, says, "It may be argued that he will be able to serve better after he has completed college, which is true; however this experience of assuming leadership, of grappling with some of life's problems, gives reality and value to the courses...".

Another college teacher writes, "The fear that a student might not return to college once he would drop out... is a very thin argument for opposing voluntary service. The values gained are so much greater".

A college graduate, voluntary service worker, says, "I think this idea of a year out of college has real values... I think the opportunity to practice ideals learned in school in a setup designed on a philosophy similar to that of the school will be of advantage to a student. This would be in contrast to the student who gets his first practical application of his ideals to life in a... work with a different approach".

A college registrar says, "A college student might profit by a year in V. S. as might anyone else. Any practical experience a college student has serves to enrich his college life and the value of his college course. This particular type of practical experience

should be valuable to him as a Christian in a Mennonite situation, again as it should be to anyone else. If he can catch and enhance a spirit of Christian service by taking a year from college, it will well repay the delay in completing his college education."

Another individual recommends the year out between the sophomore and junior year so that students who decide on life vocation during this service can adjust their last two years accordingly.

One college teacher who comments on the credit angle voiced doubts whether credits should have even a secondary purpose in such a voluntary program. Another states clearly that never should students be in V. S. because they must do it for college credit. To these two statements I would agree.

In summary, with V. S. being young, it is not likely that college administrations would be willing to recommend a break in college to participate in such an experimental service program for a year. On the other hand, if it does present a potential channel of service and education for the church as a whole, if the Mormon ideal of a year of service is, in general, good, then the college leaders might well keep close to the program and help to develop it.



## A Study in Mennonite Family Trends in Elkhart County, Indiana

By  
Howard Good

Glenn Martin and I were under the guidance of Dean Bender and Professor Hershberger in gathering information and statistics on the Mennonite family in Elkhart county. Mr. Martin studied the residential and occupational trends; I spent my time attempting to gain information on family sizes. The groups studied were the M. B. C., Central Conference, Amish and Mennonite. We worked together in gathering the statistics and then made our individual studies of the trends under the assigned heads.

Eighteen hundred post-cards, each with 59 questions, were printed. We had personal interviews with all the pastors, soliciting their cooperation in the distribution of the questionnaires to the family heads represented in their congregations. Among the Amish, we contacted the bishops in charge. In this manner we handed 875 cards to the Mennonites, 494 to the Amish; 220 to the M. B. C.'s, and 205 to the General Conference group.

The returns were slow in coming in and the final percentage returns were as follows: Old Mennonites 42.5%; Mennonite Brethern in Christ 31.8%; General Conference. 22.4% and Amish 18.8%. Because of the somewhat low returns we cannot therefore insist upon the findings as absolutely valid. However, I do believe that the statistics and percentages might, at least, be indicative.

In this discussion of the Elkhart Mennonite family, we will examine the family size for the last three generations. We will then observe that the shrinkage of family size is not due to either a higher infant mortality rate or a later marriage age.

But we will notice that the family size does vary directly, in most cases, with the mother's age at birth of first child and the length of the child-bearing period. In this study no comparisons were made as to educational status. If another study is made it would be interesting to see if education produces any marked effects upon family size.

The statistics are taken from all cards where the mother's age ranges from 45 to 56. The average number of children in which these mothers' parents are a member constitutes generation one. The average number of children in the family of which these mothers are a member makes up generation two. The average number of children in these mothers' families constitutes generation three.

The Amish had the largest families three generations ago and are still the largest. Their families averaged 8.8 children in the first generation; 9.4 in the second and 8.7 in the third. It is interesting to note that during the second period one family had 20

children. Another mother gave birth to 13 children in 12 years. One can quite definitely assume that no modern trends have affected the size of the Amish family. The average is practically as large now as it was three generations ago. The line of the graph is therefore almost straight.

But this is not the story of the other three Mennonite groups. The average M. B. C. family size three generations ago was 7.7 children; in the second generation it declined to 6 and now in the third it has dropped to 5. This group averages 2.7 fewer children per family than did the family of three generations ago. If this trend keeps on, we can say fare-well to this group unless others are adopted into the fold through rigorous evangelistic efforts.

But if the Old Mennonites look at their record they will notice that if their decline is permitted to continue none of their group will be here to witness the passing of any other denomination. The Old Mennonite family has declined from an average of 7 children in the first generation to 5.9 in the second to 4.8 in the third. The average family now has 2.2 fewer children than the typical family of three generations ago.

The General Conference group shows the greatest decline. The average family size in the first generation was 6.8; this dropped to 5.8 in the second and then declined sharply to 2.9 in the third. This means a decline of 3.9 children in three generations. In this study we will notice that the greatest range is usually between the Amish and General Conference groups.

The fertility rate corresponds with family size. The fertility rate is found by finding the number of children under five years of age for every one thousand women of child bearing age (15-45). By taking this formula, the fertility rate among the Amish was found to be 1015; among the Old Mennonites 819; among the M. B. C.'s 554 and among the General Conference 208. These figures are high because from the cards it was impossible to include all women between 15 and 45. Only married women who had children reported. Those without families very seldom sent in cards. The national fertility rate in 1800 was 976. By 1934, it had declined to 350. All Mennonite groups, except the General Conference, are still above the national norm. The trend has, however, affected the General Conference group for their fertility rate is 142 less than the national norm.

Let us examine this family size in contrast with the death rate of children under five born during the following periods; (1916-1925) - (1926-1935) - (1936-1945).

In the first period the M. B. C.'s had the highest mortality rate. 12.8% of the infants died before they reached their fifth birthday. This rate dropped sharply in the second period to 8% but increased slightly in the third period to 8.5%.

The Amish mortality rate was somewhat lower than that of the M. B. C. group in all three periods. It also took a decided drop in



the second period, dropping from 10.3% in the first period to 7.6% in the second. In the last period, this death rate continued to drop. The mortality rate during this period was 7.4%.

The Old Mennonite group, however, holds the lowest mortality record for all three periods. In the first period 9.6% of the children died before they reached their fifth birthday. This percentage dropped to 6.8 in the second period and to 6.7 in the third.

It is very significant to note that for all three groups the mortality rate dropped sharply in the second period and remained almost constant for the third period. We suggest that medical science made its most forward strides during this era. Perhaps, too, each group became more sensitive to the value of medical care and consequently took advantage of the medical facilities at its disposal. The General Conference group is not included on this matter because of insufficient data.

The M. B. C. have an average mortality rate of 9.8%; the Amish, 8.5% and the Old Mennonites have an average of 7.7% of the children dying before they reach their fifth birthday.

The shrinkage of family size is therefore not due to a higher infant mortality rate in each succeeding period. On the other hand many more children live; but in spite of this favorable trend in the mortality rate, it does not increase the family size.

We will compare the trend in three generations. The statistics for period one are taken from mothers now over 56; period two from mothers between 36 and 56; and period three from mothers under 36.

The marriage age of the Amish mother has increased for each succeeding period. It increased from 20.2 in the first period to 21.3 in the second and to 21.8 in the third. There is no apparent explanation for this trend except that the marriage age was very low during the first period and would not likely come down in each succeeding period.

The trend among the Old Mennonites is toward earlier marriages. The average age for the Old Mennonite mother during the first period was 23.4. It dropped to 22.4 in the second period; and to 21.6 in the third. Therefore we can readily see that they marry 1.8 years earlier in the third period than they did in the first.

This same trend is also noticed in the General Conference group where the shift has been from 22.3 to 22.1 to 21.8. Among the M. B. C. group it has declined from 21.1 to 21 to 19.8.

The trend among the fathers is as follows: Amish has been from 23.9 to 24.1 to 22.7; the Old Mennonite, from 26.4 to 25 to 22.9; General Conference, 25 to 24.5 to 23.7; and the M. B. C., 23.7 to 24.3 to 22.3.

The average age of marriage among all four groups for the third period is 21.25 for the bride and 22.95 for the groom.

One might expect family size to go up when marriage age comes down. This is not the case. Among the Mennonites, General



Conference and M. B. C., the marriage age comes down but so does the family size. We notice, therefore, that the shrinkage of families is not due to later marriages; for marriages, on the average, are culminated earlier today than three generations ago.

But social trends do not affect the Amish. They run counter to all the other denominations represented. In spite of the fact that their marriage age increases, family size also increases or remains constant. In the second period when their marriage age increases from 20.2 to 21.3, the number of children per family increased from 8.8 to 9.4.

We notice that the family size varies directly, in most instances, with the mother's age at the birth of the first child. The mothers now over 56 constitute period one; from 36 to 56 period two and under 36 period three.

The Amish women have their first child earlier than any other group. Their families are also the largest. The age of the mother is 22.2 for the first period, 22.4 for the second and 24.6 for the third.

The age of the M. B. C. mother was 23 in period one and 24.7 in period two. This sharp rise in the mother's age during the second period is also noticed in the General Conference group where it is 23.7 for the first period and 25 for the second. We notice that the family size took a decided slump during the same period. This slump occurred as the mother's age, until the birth of the first child, increased. The age of motherhood among the M. B. C. and General Conference remained almost constant for the third period. In the M. B. C. group it dropped from 24.7 to 24.6, while it increased from 25 to 25.3 in the General Conference group.

We have seen that the general trend is for earlier marriages. Yet the age for motherhood has gone up; hence the period between marriage and the stork's first arrival is longer; consequently the families are smaller. This longer period between marriage and the birth of the first child is no doubt one of the reasons for a shrinkage in the size of families. The high cost of living probably accounts, in some measure, for the parents' hesitancy to have children soon. They wait longer because this will give them time to finance their home. The financial obligations entailed when the child arrives is significant, consequently the waiting period and smaller families.

There are exceptions to this general rule. The Old Mennonites this time are the individualists. Instead of having their first child later, in every succeeding period, as do all the other groups, the Old Mennonite mothers tend to have them earlier. This correlates directly with the marriage age trend. The range is from 24.6 in the first period to 24.1 years in the second to 23.1 in the third. There is no apparent explanation for this drop, except that their age during the third period was, for some reason, exceptionally high. In the second period the mothers were younger.

However, their age was not lower than the average of the other three groups. In the last period the mother's age came down to 23.1 years and one may perhaps conclude that the trends have not affected the Mennonite group as much as they have some of the other denominations.

Family size corresponds directly with the child-bearing period. This is the period between the arrival of the first and last child. The Amish are again in the lead. The mothers from this group average only 22.8 years when their first child is born. They also have their children over a long period of time. The average age of the mother is 37.2 when the last child is born. This leaves a child bearing period of 14.4 years. Hence the large families.

The M. B. C. mothers average 23.5 years when their first child is born and the child-bearing period continues until they are 35.7, making this period 12.2 years in length.

The Old Mennonites have their first child later than the M. B. C.'s but the child bearing period is just as long. Motherhood begins at 24.1 and the average age at the time of the last child is 36.3, making the child bearing period 12.2 years in length.

The General Conference mothers wait a long time for the first child. This period is 3.2 years as compared with 1.7 for the Amish. Then in addition, in this group, the child bearing period is only 8.5 years. The mother has her first child at 25.3 and her last one at 33.8.

We have seen that the length of the child-bearing period always corresponds directly with family size.

This study may not be absolutely reliable because from the cards it could not be determined who were the people who have lived most of their lives on the farm and have then migrated to the city or visa versa. It had to be assumed that the individual who filled out the card has been a life-long resident in the district, (country or city) where he now lives. When the small returns are divided into both urban and rural, it means there are hardly enough cards to make an accurate study. Perhaps the trends are indicative of the actual and there is not as wide a gap between rural and urban 'Mennonites' as some might suppose. This study has not revealed any outstanding difference between the two groups.

The families do tend, however, to be slightly larger in the country than in the city. The Amish average 9 children in the country and 8.5 in the city. Children, for the Amish, are an economic asset. They finish school at 12 and work for father; consequently the number of children per family is not decreasing even in the city. Among the Old Mennonites, M. B. C.'s and General Conference, children are an economic liability. These groups educate their children and give them cultural advantages. Therefore the trend is away from large families. The M. B. C.'s average 6

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children in the country and 4 in the city; the Old Mennonites average 5 to 4.6, also in favor of the country. This trend is not followed in the General Conference group. Here the average for the city is 3.1 and 2.6 in the country.

The child-bearing period corresponds directly with family size except in the Amish group. Among the General Conference group the child bearing period is 8.6 in the city and 7.4 in the country. For the M. B. C.'s and Old Mennonites this period is longer in the country, where the families are the largest. This period for the M. B. C. is 13 years in the country and 11.3 for the city. For the Old Mennonites it is 12.9 to 14.4 in favor of the country.

This trend is not noticed among the Amish and the child bearing period in the country is 12.8 and in the city 15 years. Even in the country where the Amish child-bearing period is shorter by 1.2 years, one can still notice that this period is longer than for any other group.

For every group studied, except the Amish, the urban mother was older than the rural mother when the first child was born. The statistics are: 22.4 years for the urban Amish mother and 23.1 for the rural. In the Old Mennonite, M. B. C., and General Conference groups the mother in the city is older than her country neighbor when the first child is born. The high cost of living in the city probably accounts for the families' hesitancy to have children soon. The M. B. C. mothers average 22.5 for those in the city and 24.5 for those in the country. The statistics for this same trend among the Old Mennonites is 23.7 and 24.5 and for the General Conference group, it is 24.3 and 26.3.

The average death of children under five was higher in the country than in the city for both the Amish and M. B. C. groups. The statistics show that in the Amish group the death rate is 12.3% for children born in the country and only 4.6% for those born in the city. The death rate of children born in M. B. C. families is 11.3% for rural folks and 8.5% for city dwellers. The range is not as great as it was for the Amish. This may reveal that the families living in the city receive better medical care than do those living in the country. But this conclusion cannot be generally applied because the death rate of children for the Old Mennonites is higher in the city than in the country. 8.2% of the children born to city dwellers and 7.1% of the children born to rural families die before they are five years old. The data for the General Conference group is too scanty to make any conclusions.

These comparisons show that there seems to be a tendency to have larger families in the country; the child bearing period corresponds directly with family size; urban mothers are generally older than their rural neighbor when the first child is born and the death rate for children under 5 tends to be lower in the city than in the country.



## The Life Cycle of Mennonite Families in Marion County, Kansas

By I. G. Neufeld

Tabor College, 1947

The literature of scientific studies, either economic or sociological, on Mennonite families in the middle west, is rather scarce. Though the Russian-Mennonites were among the first settlers to inhabit the western plains of Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, in fact, were the only settlers coming en masse to stay during the middle 1870's, they have been overlooked by the sociologist and economist for what must appear to them more promising fields.

Due to language barriers and social and religious customs, Mennonites in Kansas are still being regarded by some as queer. It was with amusement, as well as irritation, that I listened to fellow students at the University of Kansas discussing certain wedding and family customs supposedly prevalent among Mennonites in Kansas, customs of which I had never heard.

The study of sociology in general, and that of the family in particular, holds an important place in the curriculum of Mennonite colleges, but the material on the life of the Mennonite family is rather scanty. The encouragement that the executive committee of the Mennonite Cultural Problems Conference has given to the family studies undertaken in Elkhart County, Indiana, and Marion County, Kansas, is therefore significant. This may well prove to be the beginning of a much larger study including representative Mennonite areas throughout the United States and Canada.

It was suggested that the present writer make a survey of family trends in the Mennonite Brethren church at Hillsboro, and the Springfield Krimmer Mennonite Brethren church, both in Marion county, Kansas. The choice of the Springfield church is probably unfortunate, because of its size, and secondly, because of the heavy inbreeding practiced in this group. Twenty-four families constitute the entire resident membership of this church, and they are so inter-married as to make some aspects of this survey unreliable.

On the other hand, however, it is interesting to watch this small group, wedged in between two powerful and aggressive churches, the Alexanderwohl (General Conference Mennonite) Church to the south, and the Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church to the north, fight successfully for its life. Unable to expand agriculturally, available land in the vicinity being farmed by Mennonites belonging to other groups, or numerically, unless they are more successful in propagandizing their nearest neighbors, the Springfield church is destined to remain static or decline.

For a number of years Springfield has provided other churches with a considerable percentage of their new members.

Since this study was only begun a few months prior to holding the conference, it was impossible to go beyond the assigned task. Plans, however, are being made to extend the survey to all Mennonite groups, including the M.B., K.M.B., General Conference Mennonites, and Holdeman in Marion county. Only then will there be anything like a satisfactory study of the Mennonite family in the county.

This present paper is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the M.B. and the Krimmer family in the Hillsboro community. Other factors, such as the use of the German mother tongue in conjunction with religious practices, and rural residence, as well as income, may well affect the life and size of the Mennonite family. Russian-Mennonite family life is being modified in four directions: first, by moving from the farm to town; second, by breaking up a compact settlement through the establishment of a large co-operative creamery within the boundary of the community, third, by higher education; and fourth, by a higher social and economic status.

Most of the data used by this study were gathered through a door-to-door family survey done under the direction of the writer by the students of the Mennonite history and church history classes at Tabor College, Hillsboro, during May, 1947. The Springfield church and the members of the M.B. church living on farms were canvassed by mail.

During the house-to-house visitation all Mennonite families were surveyed, regardless of church affiliation. Upon completion, those families not belonging to the M. B. or Krimmer churches were eliminated and these records form the nucleus for a further study to be undertaken in the near future.

The gathering of information from families living on farms was no small matter. Approximately 100 questionnaires, with an accompanying letter explaining the purpose of the study, were mailed out. Within a week about one-third of the families responded. A penny postcard was mailed to the others requesting that they return their questionnaires at their earliest convenience. Again approximately one-third of the remainder responded.

Not satisfied with the returns, copies of the letter sent out originally, as well as another copy of the questionnaire, were sent out. Again about one-third of the remaining families responded. The pastors of both churches were very cooperative in this matter, and while the minister at Springfield made an announcement from the pulpit requesting the congregation to cooperate, the M.B. church bulletin carried a similar request in its announcements. Only one family responded to the bulletin.

In one way or another, however, 23 of the 24 families at Springfield responded, which is a total of 95.8 per cent, while informa-



tion from 192 M.B. families out of 243 was obtained, a total of 79 per cent.

A number of the questionnaires returned were incomplete and some of the data appeared unreliable. In some instances students had canvassed the same family twice, and some of the farmers receiving by mistake two questionnaires responded more than once. These cards were taken to the respective ministers and checked against available records.

The concept of the family as understood here, unless otherwise specified, means the biological and socio-economic unit including no more than two generations, that is, both the father and mother with or without children, living alone in a household.

The country as well as the village or small town church is primarily an institution of families rather than of individuals; it is a family church. A thorough knowledge of the family units that make up the entire church population is therefore desirable. Every church population, as any other group, has people of all ages in it. The fact, however, that the proportions in different age groups, 0-4,5 to 14, etc., may differ greatly from one church to another introduces a number of complications into the study of each church population.

It is obvious when such differences in ages exist, they will help to account for many other differences. The younger the people are that make up the church membership, the lower should be the crude death rate. The mortality rate rises rapidly in the higher ages. It has also a smaller proportion of wage-earning men and women, and therefore should affect adversely contributions toward church finances and charities. Such churches should have a high birth rate and a high marriage rate, but fewer dependents among the aged. If, however, the church population is made up of a large proportion of old people, it would add to the death rate and subtract from the birth rate.

#### AGE STUDY

In order to determine the percentage distribution of family households by age of the head in the M.B. and Krimmer churches, seven divisions, according to decades, were made within each denomination. Ages in group one included all family heads with an age of 25 years or less. Group two included ages 26-35; group three, 36-45; group four, 46-55; group five, 56-65; group six, 66-75; and group seven included heads of households aged 76 or more.

A breakdown of the returns for the M.B. church shows that at the extreme ends of the age groups there are 3.6 per cent of fathers who are 25 years old or under, whereas 5.4 per cent are 76 years old or over. There is a sharp rise in the next age group, that of 26-35, to 17.4 per cent; 19.4 per cent in the 36-45 group, until it reaches the climax in the 46-55 years of age group with 27.2 per cent. After that there is a sudden drop to 15.6 per cent for



those 56-65 years old, and 11.4 per cent for those 66-75 years old.

It is of interest to note that 67.6 per cent of the married men are in the prime of their life, 55 years old or under, and that 16.8 per cent have reached or passed the retirement age.

A comparison of the two churches shows that the average age of heads of households at Springfield is seven years younger than that in the Hillsboro M.B. church. Whereas the first group at Springfield, that of 25 years of age and under, represents only 4.7 per cent, that of the next group, 26-35, is the largest with 38.1 per cent, followed by 28.5 per cent for the 36-45 years of age. The drop to the next group is almost as sudden as the rise to the climax. Only 9.6 per cent of the married men are between the age of 46-55; 4.7 between 56-65; 9.6 per cent between 66-75; and 4.7 per cent are 76 years old or over.

In the M.B. church the largest single age group is that between 46-55, the average age for all married men being 49.9; in the K.M.B. church the largest group is between 26-35, the average age for the married men in the church being 42.9, or seven years younger.

It seems from the above that the Springfield church in the course of its history has lost an entire generation of men, which is reflected in the percentage distribution by age of the entire church population.

C. F. Plett, pastor of the Springfield church, partially explains the absence of this age group by the fact that the older sons of the early settlers that were born at the turn of the century, entered professions and moved to other communities. A number of these men who are now between 40-60 years of age are medical doctors, dentists, missionaries and teachers.

The total church population of the M.B. church is 988, of these 5.6 per cent are four years old or less. The Springfield church with a population of only 129, has almost three times as many in the same age group, i.e., 13.9 per cent. In the next division, that of 5-14, the M.B.'s have only 10.7 per cent, compared with 14.7 per cent for the K.M.B. As could be expected, the largest age group at Springfield is between 25-34 with 24 per cent, which corresponds somewhat to the similar age group for the heads of the households in that church. While the M.B.'s are still rising to 20.5 per cent in the 35-44 age group, Springfield is already dropping to 21.7 per cent. From now on we are in for a surprise, while the drop at Hillsboro is gradual from 16.4 per cent in the 45-54 age group, to 8 per cent in the 55-64 group and to 5.4 per cent in the group of 65 and over, Springfield takes a dive to 5.5 per cent to .8 per cent and 4.7 per cent for the corresponding age divisions. While 29.8 per cent of the church population in Hillsboro is 45 years old or over, there are only 11 per cent in the corresponding group in Springfield.

The difference in percentage distribution by ages, especially in the higher brackets, needs an explanation. For many years Hills-

boro has served as a place of retirement for farmers from the neighboring M.B. churches at Ebenfield, Lehigh and Tampa, as well as for K.M.B. churches at Springfield and Gnadenau. The youngest baptised member in Hillsboro is 13 years old and the oldest 93. The total church membership as of December 31, 1946, was 738, of which 70, or 9.4 per cent were past the Biblical age of three score and ten.

### MARRIAGE

A primary characteristic of the rural family is that its members marry at an early age, and the children are, therefore, born while the parents are still relatively young. On the basis of a tabulation of the two churches under observation (Table III), the average age when men and women married during the period of 1891-1947, as well as the average age for each decade was obtained.

Both grooms and brides in the Springfield church marry somewhat younger than in the Hillsboro church. The average age for men marrying in the M.B. church is 25.9 and that for the Krimmer church 24.9, while the women marry at the M.B. church at 22.75 and in the K.M.B. church at 22.5 years of age.

Though the average age for men marrying in Hillsboro is quite constant for every decade beginning with 1891, the favorite age at which the largest number of men take their vows fluctuates somewhat. The few men that marry at 40 or 45 in each decade help to level off the average age. Several men married at 19, while others at 46 or 47.

Brides in the M.B. church were more than three years older during World War II than during the first war. While the average of the girls marrying since 1891 is 22.75, in the decade following 1911 the average was only 19.9, a difference of nearly three years. The peak, however, was reached during the depression, 1931-1940, when the average age of brides was 24, dropping to 23 during the last war. Between 1891 and 1910 the average was constant with 21.5 and 21.8 respectively.

In what direction will the trend be in the post-war period? Will girls continue to marry at an older age, or will the average age drop to the "between the war and depression" period of 22.6?

According to Glenn Martin and Howard Good, co-authors of "A Study in Mennonite Family Trends", Goshen College, 1946, a survey made in Elkhart County, Indiana, indicates that Old Mennonite brides marry at the age of 22.97, and the General Conference women at 22.9, which is only slightly older than the women in the Hillsboro community, which is 22.74 and 22.52 for the M.B.'s and the K.M.B.'s respectively. Amish girls, however, are almost two years younger when they marry at the average age of 20.82. Correspondingly, Amish grooms are about 2.3 years younger than Mennonite Brethren, who marry at the age of 25.9, and the General Conference men 1.39 years younger, with the Old Mennonites in between with 25.05.



Though the average age difference between husband and wife in the Hillsboro church is only 3.16 years for the entire period, 1891-1947, there is at least one couple where the husband is 18 years older, and several others with age differences ranging from 14-17 years. In 12.13 per cent of all marriages the wife is older than the husband, the difference ranging from one to seven years, on an average the wife being 2.27 years older than her husband.

Since 1931 men prefer to marry women nearer their own age. While in the decades following 1891 and 1911 the largest single group of men married women three years younger than themselves, during the depression years more than one-third of all men married wives only one year their junior. This trend has kept up since the beginning of World War II.

All Mennonite groups in Elkhart county, according to Martin and Good, have a larger percentage of women that are older than **their husbands**. The Amish show a total of 20.8 per cent where the bride is older than the groom. The General Conference reported 32.4 percent of their married women being older than their husbands. The K.M.B. in the Hillsboro community are very similar to the M.B.'s with 13 per cent of older wives.

#### CHILD-BEARING PERIOD

The average age of the mother in the M.B. church at the time of her first child during the 1891-1947 period is 24.85, and 24.22 years for the mothers at Springfield. There is a gradual increase in the age of the mothers during this period. While during the 20-year period following 1891 the average age was 24.67, it was 24.69 during 1911-1930, then rising to 25.21 in the period since 1931.

Mothers of 45 years of age and older are selected in order to consider only women who are past the child-bearing period. There is only one woman, however, in the Hillsboro church who had her last child at 54. The other women range in age from 18-44 at the time their last child was born, the average for the entire period in the Hillsboro church being 36.2. For the K.M.B. women the average at the time of their last child is 39, a difference of 2.8 years.

The average age at which mothers have their last child in the Hillsboro church has declined from about 38 years during the 1891-1910 period, to about 36 years, for the 20-year period following 1911. Since 1931 there seems to be a slight rise in the age of the mothers at the time of their last child.

The average length of the child-bearing period for the M.B. mother is only 11.35 years, and that for the K.M.B. mother 14.78 years. This is very similar to the General Conference mothers in Elkhart county, Indiana, where the child-bearing period is only 8.5 years, 2.85 years less than in the Hillsboro church. The Amish, however, are in the lead in Elkhart county with 14.4 years, followed by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Old Mennonites each with 12.2 years.



From the above figures it seems that the Springfield mothers have the longest child-bearing period followed by the Amish, the M.B.C. and Old Mennonites, and the Hillsboro M.B. church, in that order, with the General Conference mothers making up the rear. The difference between the longest and shortest child-bearing period, that of the K. M. B. and General Conference mothers, is 6.28 years.

#### FAMILY SIZE

Following the nationwide trend toward smaller families, Mennonites in the Hillsboro community in an alarming manner have been influenced by this modern trend.

The family of which the mothers of this group are members, i.e., the number of sons and daughters in her parents' family, make up generation two, and the children in her grandmother's family constitute generation three.

The sample studied was rather small in the case of the M. B. church, only 41 women for generation one and two, and 33 for generation three, and entirely too small for the K.M.B. group to be taken into consideration. However, according to this procedure the average number of children for families in generation one was 3.58, which is less than half of the number of children for generation two, which is 8.36. Generation three again is lower with an average of 7 children per family.

Similar results were obtained by another method in which the size of families of 185 mothers, regardless of age, which are members of the Hillsboro church, was obtained. This compilation showed that the average family has 3.91 children, which is only slightly higher than the average obtained by the standard method. The second generation in this case, that is the families of which these 185 mothers were members themselves, average 8.15 children, which almost tallies with 8.36, and generation three has 6.6 children which is only .4 less than the average obtained by the standard method.

The size of the K.M.B. family according to this method of compilation was 4 children for generation one, 8.56 for generation two, and 8.34 for generation three. Twenty-two and twenty-three families, respectively, were studied in this group.

It is of interest that the second generation in the M.B. church has a considerably larger family, 8.36 children, compared with 7 for generation three; a trend which does not seem warranted. Whatever the cause for these smaller families may have been, one explanation may be that many of the people interviewed were in doubt as to the number of brothers and sisters their parents had. On the questionnaires returned by mail the space pertaining to the number of brothers and sisters their parents had was in many instances left blank, or a question mark behind answers given indicated doubt. It is astonishing how many people have little information and less interest beyond their immediate family.

The size of the Amish family of the present generation is almost double that of the Hillsboro M.B. family. Whereas the Amish family has an average 6.7 children, the Hillsboro family has only 3.58. The M.B.C. family has only 3 children and the Old Mennonite 2.8.

Assuming then that the average family in Hillsboro has 3.58 children and that it takes 3 children for a family to replace itself, the present writer would like to reemphasize the warning issued by Martin and Good that all Mennonite families in Elkhart county, with the exception of the Amish, face extinction if this trend prevails. From above figures it would seem as if the M.B.'s and the K.M.B.'s a generation or two hence, will be in no need for either large and spacious churches or schools. The Old Folks' Homes, however, will be crowded with people who have no one to take care of them.

Another method of obtaining an index of the fertility of women is that of the "fertility ratio", or the ratio of children under 5 years of age to women of child-bearing age. Some authors compute the number of children per 1000 women 15 to 45 years, others take women between the ages of 20-45 or 48.

The fertility ratio for the M.B. and K.M.B. churches obtained on the basis of children under 5 per 1000 women 15-45 years of age, gives 229 for the M.B. and 525 for the K. M. B. churches. The difference of the ratio between these two churches is so pronounced as to cast doubt on the validity of the results obtained.

Martin and Good, however, have obtained equally, if not more startling results in their study. According to these authors the Amish have a fertility ratio of 1015, among the Old Mennonites it is 819, among the M.B.C. it is 554 and among the General Conference it is 208. The latter ratio corresponds somewhat to the fertility ratio of 229 in the M.B. church at Hillsboro.

There are 20 families in the M.B. church without any children and 20 families with only one child. The largest single group, 34 families, or 18.36 per cent, have three children each, the average size for all families being 3.91.

The attempt to correlate the size of the family and the age of the mother at the time of her first child is not quite satisfactory. No trend can definitely be determined or valid conclusions drawn. A total of 97 M.B. women of 45 years of age and over and their 532 children were studied. These women have an average of 5.48 children.

The largest single group, 18.55 per cent of the total, had their first child at 24. They also had the largest percentage of children, i.e., 22, averaging 6.55 children per family. This is more than one child higher than the average for the total group. The women that had their first child at 21, averaged 7.37 children, however, only 8.24 per cent of the total number of women studied, are in this group.

There is one woman who had her first child at 19 and one at 30,



and each of these has 8 children. One mother who had her first child at 31 gave birth to 10 children.

#### DEATH RATE

Two inquiries were made into the infant mortality rate in the Hillsboro community, showing the death rates of children under 1 and 5 years of age. In both cases the rate was computed for children born during the following periods: (1896-1905) - (1906-1915) - (1916-1925) - (1926-1935) and (1936-1945).

The decline in the death rate from 13.17 per cent during the first period (1896-1905) to 4.55 per cent for the last period (1935-1945) is very pronounced for children under one. During the second period the rate dropped to 9.2 per cent, to 4.86 per cent for the third period, and to 1.62 per cent for the fourth period (1926-1935), rising again during the last period to 4.55 per cent. Dr. A. C. Eitzen, one of the physicians in Hillsboro, who has been practicing in the community for 24 years, cannot account for the sudden drop in the death rate during the 1926-1935 period. Only two children out of a total of 123 born died in this decade, whereas in the preceding period 7 died out of a total of 144 born. During the succeeding period 5 died out of a total of 109. The only explanation he has, which seems to be the correct one, is, that the number of cases involved is so small that a few accidental deaths of a few children would affect the percentage death rate out of all proportion.

For comparison, Table XII showing the death rate of children under five in Hillsboro, has been combined with that for Elkhart county by Martin and Good. The Elkhart study computes only the mortality rate since 1916, whereas the Hillsboro survey begins with 1896.

In each period the death rate in Hillsboro is considerably lower than that for any group in Elkhart. The average death rate for the M.B.C. is 9.8 per cent; 8.5 per cent for the Amish, and 7.7 per cent for the Old Mennonites. For the Mennonite Brethren in Hillsboro the average rate for the corresponding period (1916-1945) is 5.8 per cent.

The present writer does not make the claim that Kansas is a better state to live in but a conclusion in that direction seems warranted, so far as the chance for more children to survive is concerned.

The death rate according to sex since 1891 for all families interviewed in the M.B. church, is very much in favor of the female. While 54 males out of a total of 371 died during this 56-year period, only 33 females died out of a total of 372 born during the same period. Males, therefore, die at the rate of approximately 163.6 per 100 females.



**SEX RATIO**

The M.B. church has a startling number of widows, 51 as of December 31, 1946, in comparison to only 13 widowers. Every 14th member of the church is a widow, i.e., 7 per cent of the total membership.

There are 51 members in the church that have reached the Biblical age of 70 but are not yet 80; 19 of these are men and 32 are women. In the group that are 80 years old or over, the sex ratio is in reverse, 11 men and 8 women. According to this data, women have a better chance to reach the age of 70, but have a higher death rate than men between the ages of 70 and 80.

The number of males per 100 females has been steadily declining among Mennonites in the Hillsboro community during the last three generations, until today the two sexes are almost evenly matched in numbers. The first generation constitutes the children of interviewed families; the second generation the families of which they themselves are members; and the third generation the families of which their fathers and mothers were members.

In the first generation there are 99.73 males per 100 females; in generation two 111.6 males per 100 females; and in generation three 113.8 males per 100 females. In the first group 743 persons were sampled, in generation two 2880 and in the third generation 2121 persons.

The figures for the K.M.B. are 9.7, 100.1 and 131 males per 100 females, respectively. Only 89 persons were classified for the first generation, 402 for generation two, and 354 for the third generation.

**OCCUPATIONS**

The occupational trend in the M.B. church is clear to everyone. Whereas only 45 per cent of the heads of households interviewed are engaged in farming, almost twice that many, 86.4 per cent, of their "fathers" were listed as farmers. The M. B. church is moving rapidly away from the soil in which it was planted by the fathers in the 1870's. If this race away from the farm persists, the church in another generation will have lost almost all connections with the soil.

Skills, such as carpentering, plumbing, butchering and electrical work, has attracted the largest percentage, 14.3, of the non-farming group, followed closely by the professions, such as the ministry, medicine, teaching and journalism, with 12.4 per cent.

The Hillsboro M.B. church is blessed with an abundance of ordained ministers, a total of 19, most of whom, however, are not listed under professions because they gain their livelihood by farming, teaching, or some other occupation. There are 12 missionaries, in foreign fields or in retirement, 13 college professors, 9 high school teachers, 7 grade school teachers, and two teachers in Mennonite schools in Paraguay.

The medical profession is well represented with 5 doctors and dentists, 15 nurses.

The occupation of 5.7 per cent of the "fathers" was listed as skilled labor and 2.6 per cent as professional. There was a weaver and a tailor among the "fathers", a skill lost to the present generation. Businesses, such as banking, grocery stores, lumber yards, attract 7.4 per cent of the present members.

Tabor College attracts a large number of married men to Hillsboro, and 9.3 per cent of the interviewed gave their occupation as students. The common laboring group has almost doubled from 3 per cent a generation ago to 5.6 per cent today. Three per cent listed themselves as clerks and another 3 per cent as salesmen; the difference between these two occupations was not clear from the information obtained.

The K.M.B. are still largely farmers, with one of the members a college professor, one a mechanic, and one a funeral director. If a family moves away from Springfield, either to retire or to engage in some other occupation, they usually join some other church. Springfield has seen a steady stream of its sons and daughters drift away from the home community, enriching the life of other churches throughout the land.

# Methods of Acquiring Home Ownership

*By*

Howard Raid

The topic assigned to me is Methods of Acquiring Home Ownership. However, I would like to consider it as part of the larger problem, namely, that of building and maintaining strong Mennonite communities. All of the present day training, techniques, and knowledge of social sciences is not the end which we seek. They can never become a real substitute for the Mennonite Christian way of life. Nor are they to be considered as the sole means of understanding life. Rather the training, techniques and knowledge which the social sciences provide can be used as a means to understand and aid society. But only Christianity can provide the values which give to life real meaning.

How shall we begin to build our strong Mennonite communities? It should be obvious that we cannot have strong Christian Mennonite communities unless we have strong Christian Mennonites living there. From that it follows that we must do at least two things; first, develop strong Christian Mennonites; second, provide ways and means for them to stay in the Mennonite communities. We shall attempt to study only the second in this paper. Our problem then is how can we aid Mennonite young people to settle in our communities. More specifically, how can we aid Mennonite young people in the purchase of farms. In the world of reality, however, we cannot separate the two problems and hope to achieve success.

We realize that not all of the young people want to stay on the farm or even in the nearby villages. We would also be the last to even suggest that they must do so. But we do urge that all of the young people that desire to stay on farms or in the home community be aided in the realization of that desire.

Because farmers combine their home and place of business it is extremely difficult to make any pure economic analysis of the purchase of a farm. Often other than economic motives have directed that purchase. For example in most Mennonite settlements farms have been purchased because of their location.

As we attempt to study farm purchases several special problems are recognized. The first problem is that of providing opportunities for young people to get started in farming. The day is past when a young man can "work out" a few summers and save enough to get started in farming. Nor is working in the city a very good way to acquire starting capital. When a young man goes to the city to work he seldom comes back to the farm even if he does save up enough money. Working in the city does not teach the young man how to farm. He may gain new and useful skills but he does not gain in the technical knowledge or practices about farming. The "ideal" situation is to have the young man work on the farm under the guidance of a trained



farmer and at the same time be able to accumulate his starting capital within a few years time.

The second problem is that of the purchase of the farm. In our present day society when the individual has to look out for himself there are a number of conditions which make it extremely difficult for him to pay for a farm. First if he has to depend upon his own earnings he may be middle aged before he has enough money saved to purchase a farm. Second, he may have to put a large mortgage on the farm which will take him the rest of his lifetime to pay off, if he is lucky. Third, if he buys on the open market he probably will be forced to buy at a time of inflated land prices while he pays for the farm under conditions of deflated farm product prices. Fourth, he probably will not be able to buy a farm as a "going concern." Fifth, there is a greater possibility that as a renter he will have had to move around much more than if his family has a farm. If the family aids the son in his purchase some of these problems are cleared up. However, he may have the problem of waiting until the father has retired before he can take over the farm.

The third problem is that of providing security for the parents. The Scriptures urge caring for the parents. Our present day secular society upholds the idea that the parents should have first claim upon what they have earned. Two extremes of this problem can be found in our present day society. First, the parents may never be satisfied that they have saved enough money to retire. As a result they keep on working when they are no longer able to do so. When they finally retire the farm often goes to an outsider because the children are well established on another farm or in some other business. Secondly, the parents may give the farm to worthless children and then suffer because the children refuse to care for them. The first course of action is the one most likely to happen among Mennonites but we should not rule out the possibility of the second one also occurring. The problem may also appear in all gradations between these two extremes.

The fourth problem is that of division of the estate. Most estates are divided equally among all the children. Because we divide the estate equally we assume that all the children are being treated equitably. Actually often times some of the children are being treated very unfairly. Especially is the above true when one or two children have stayed at home and cared for the parents and then receive only the same share as the other children.

In far too many cases the son farming the home place with the parents must buy any improvements in buildings or land when he purchases the farm. Likewise if a son farms the home place the other children are prone to think that they have done him a favor and that he should pay more for the farm than if it is sold to someone else.

Another condition which makes estate settlement difficult is the increased emphasis upon individualism in present day society. Individualism often causes children that have left the farm to demand that the farm be sold for cash on the open market. When such a policy is followed the beginning farmer seldom has a chance against the wealthy investor. In such cases the farm is sold to an absentee landlord, usually to the detriment of the farm and the community.

These are the four main problems to be faced in the purchase of farms today and especially of family farms. The study made by the author of methods successfully used by young men in the Zion Mennonite Church near Donnellson, Iowa, attempted to discover some techniques which had overcome these problems. The data were secured through interviews with each of the present active and retired farm operators, from the legal records at the courthouse, and from a personal knowledge of this, the author's home community.

Data were secured on the first problem, how to provide opportunities to get started in farming. Of the 102 boys in the paternal families of the present operators near Donnellson eighty-eight per cent started in farm work. Of the eighty-eight per cent ninety per cent became farmers.

It should be apparent that an early start in farming for oneself is also desirable. In the Donnellson settlement 50 per cent of the operators were farming for themselves by the time they were 25 years old and 86 per cent by the time they were 31 years old. The remaining 14 per cent were farming under some profit sharing plan with their parents.

Table 1. The year the operator became 21 years old and the main source of his starting equipment.

Type of work he did after 21 years old	Year he reached the age of 21					
	1881-1910		1911-1930		1931-1946	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Work at home without wages	5	26	1	4	-	-
Work at home with wages	-	-	-	-	-	-
Partner with parents	4	21	10	41	7	70
Farm hand	6	32	-	-	-	-
Rented land; used dad's machinery	4	21	9	37	3	30
Inherited	-	-	2	9	-	-
Totals	19	100	24	100	10	1000

The difficulty of getting starting capital at the present time is also suggested by the data given in Table 1. Of the young men that were 21 years old in 1881-1910, 58 per cent accumulated their



starting capital through farm labor, while none of the similar group in 1931-1946 were able to use this method.

Working as a farm laborer to get started in farming had been the traditional American pioneer practice. If the son stayed at home and helped his father, when he was ready to start out on his own he was given a team of horses, a wagon, plow, and three-corner harrow. Even with the low wages of that day it was also possible, if necessary, to "work out" and save enough capital to purchase this type of equipment. However, with the rather sudden widespread use of the tractor and tractor-drawn equipment there has been a great increase in the amount of starting capital required. Therefore the son now should be able to accumulate much more capital in about the same length of time before he starts into farming for himself.

Since in recent years "working out" was too slow as a means of capital accumulation, other means were tried. This caused the breakdown of the traditional "first rung" farm hand and completed the establishment of a new "rung" in the agricultural ladder to farm ownership. The new "rung" developed slowly to meet the changing conditions.

The depression of the 1930's augmented the shift to the new "rung" which consisted of some form of a profit-sharing arrangement. Since jobs were not available in the cities some of the young men who would have otherwise gone there remained on the farm. Through the profit-sharing arrangement the son was able to accumulate capital with which he purchased additional equipment for his own farming enterprise. It was often rubber-tired power driven equipment which he also was able to use for further capital accumulation through custom work. Similar profit-sharing arrangements had been used before this time. The excess labor plus the ease of farming more distant tracts of land with rubber-tired equipment, however, caused this arrangement to be more widely used in the Mid-west during and since the depression.

This completed the development of the new "rung" in the ladder to land ownership which usually consists of custom work with variations of two father-son arrangements. In the first type of arrangement the father and son form a partnership to operate the home farm. Each receives a share of the income equal to the responsibility he assumes and the resources and labor he supplies. The partnership works excellently if it lasts only a few years. If it is of long duration it may hinder the chances of land ownership for the son, unless he is allowed to assume more responsibility for the operation of the farm and therefore receives a larger share of the income. The latter is very important if he is to accumulate enough capital to purchase the farm when he has the opportunity.

Under the conditions of the second plan the son borrows his father's equipment with which he farms nearby rented land. The



son lives at home and helps his father with the work on the home place for the use of the equipment and his board and room.

In neither case is it necessary for the father to increase his capital investment. Yet he is able to give his son the opportunity to accumulate the larger amount of capital required to get started in farming. Through these arrangements the son receives a share in the profits of farming even though he does not have much capital invested. Under either one of these plans he also has the continued benefit of his father's guidance in actual farm work as he learns to manage the farming enterprise.

It is important to note that in the last fifteen years the only way the young men did get started in farming for themselves was by direct aid from their parents. Rugged individualism can still be spoken of as an ideal, but seldom does a young man become a farmer through his own efforts in our present day society.

The data secured indicated that the young men had to work longer in periods of depression than they did during periods of inflation before they started in to farm for themselves. Only one young man worked in town and then came back to the farm. He got started in farming by using his father's machinery.

Not only did the family provide the major share of the opportunities to get starting equipment but they also furnished 67 per cent of the first farms rented. In the state of Iowa only 32 per cent of the tenants are related to the landlords. Undoubtedly the related tenancy aided the beginning farmer because he had the continued advice and guidance of his father as he began the operation of the farm for himself.

There does not seem to be any evidence that the type of rent differed greatly from that common in the area. However, since most of the renting was from relatives it is doubtful if the rent was excessive in many cases.

We now consider the second problem, that of purchasing the farm. All of these farmers had some direct aid from their families in getting started farming. Nearly all of them also received aid in the purchase of a farm. On the average the sons were able to take over the family farms at a younger age than their brothers that purchased from outsiders. Other things being equal, the younger the men are when they purchase a farm the easier it should be for them to pay for it. The only available data indicated that the Mennonite farmers purchased their farms at an earlier average age than most farmers.

Even if they did take over their farms at an early age they were well trained in farming practices. After they were 21 years old these farmers had averaged 5.8 years of farm work and 7.8 years of renting before they purchased their farms.

The data indicated that it was easier to purchase a family farm than to purchase from an outsider. During the periods of deflation when money was difficult to borrow most of the farms purchased were from the families. During periods of inflation

most of the men purchased farms from outsiders. The tendency to purchase farms at inflated land prices has been one of the most harmful practices observed. It should be noted that because more of the family farm purchases took place during depression the average price per acre was lower than that paid for farms purchased from outsiders. A comparison was made of prices paid by purchasers to relatives and to non-relatives (Table 2).

Table 2. The average per acre consideration for transfers by warranty deed between relatives compared with those between non-relatives, by decades 1890-1946

Decade	Relation transfers		Non-relation transfers	
	Number of acres	Average price per acre	Number of acres	Average price per acre
1890-1899	355	28.72	365	39.72
1900-1909	954	39.11	408	44.77
1910-1919	615	77.25	582	134.22
1920-1929	590	127.12	418	188.51
1930-1939*	-	-	-	-
1940-1946	160	82.50	666	106.45
Average price per acre		70.40		106.05

\* Not enough cases, none from an outsider.

In all cases the transfers between relatives were at a lower average price than those between non-relatives. The total average difference was \$35.65 per acre.

Some of the fathers sold the farm to the sons at below market price and considered the difference as part of the inheritance. In such cases the other children were allowed to purchase farms under similar conditions or given cash settlements. A number of the below average price sales were to only sons. There does not seem to be any evidence that a son was favored in the purchase of a farm to the monetary harm of the other children. On the other hand many of the family farms were sold to sons at a price above the long time productive value. None of the sons, however, bought the home farm for speculation. None of the present owners had owned any other farm before he purchased the one on which he now lives. Several, however, have bought second farms for their sons.

Transfer of the farm as a "going concern" is another important condition making for successful farm succession. "Going concern" means that the livestock and machinery on the farm are sold with the farm. In most cases in the Donnellson settlement the machinery and livestock were sold to the son a few years before he purchased the farm. Table 3 calls attention to the fact that half of the farms were transferred in this manner. Three of the four family farms that were not transferred in this manner were the second farms purchased for the sons. Only one farm was a home place, that was sold to a step-son.



The practice of selling the farm as a "going concern" does not seem to be in any danger of dying out. All family transfers in recent years have employed it. There are a number of reasons which might be suggested for urging its continued use: (1) for merely sentimental reasons or as a builder of family morale and strength, (2) to prevent the usual loss between auction price and "worked out" value of machinery, (3) to prevent the waste of getting adjusted to a strange set of tools and livestock; (4) to prevent the waste of breaking up a herd of valuable stock, (5) to prevent the waste of time and money in hunting up and trying out the needed livestock and equipment, (6) to provide an immediate income without the continual capital outlay necessary under the other method, (7) to provide an opportunity to make the best alternative use of the income.

Table. 3. Condition and source of first farm purchased by the farmers of this settlement

Condition and source of purchase	Number	Per cent
Going concern - family farm*	17	45
Partly going concern - family farm	3	8
Land and buildings only - family farm	4	10
Land and buildings only - non-family farm**	14	37
Totals	38	100

\* Family farms includes second farms owned by the father.

\*\* Farm did not belong to the immediate family.

Complete data were not available on the source of capital used to purchase farms. However, in the past it seems that most of the capital was supplied by the families without any mortgage being given. This was supplemented by neighborhood borrowing, some of it within the church membership and some outside. About 1915 the local banks provided the supplementary source but no cases are known of their being used at the present time. Some time during the depression the first use was made of the Federal Land Bank. It has proved a popular source since that time. It is believed, however, that in almost all cases the family has left money in the farm, either until the son had enough equity to secure another loan, or until the farm was paid for.

We shall now consider the third problem, that of providing security for the parents. First we shall note the evidence that the parents planned their retirement to provide for their security. Perhaps the relationship between place of residence after retirement and the general business conditions best reflects the planning for the parents' security. Data of Table 4 indicates that during periods of inflation parents retired to town. When they did so they had to purchase a house in town while in some cases still



owning the farm. Apparently in times of depression they were unable or at least unwilling to do this. As a result they retired on the farm. In other words during the last forty years when the parents retired they were reasonably sure that they had financial security of some kind.

The parents retiring to the farm may have provided security for themselves, but it may hinder the son's chances of owning the home place. This is especially true if the son desires the farm house for himself before he purchases the farm. Almost all of the fathers that retired to live on the farm lived with unmarried children. In almost all of the cases where a husband had died early in life and left a widow with children some of the children never married but made a home for the mother. This illustrates the strength of the family life. In three of the cases where the father stayed on the farm the farm is still an unsettled estate. In all three cases these farms are operated by unmarried children. All but two of the rest of the farms that fathers had retired on are now owned by sons.

In the cases where the father moved to town two farms are not now owned by the family. Three of the farms are still owned by fathers who have just recently moved to town. The rest are owned by sons. The evidence indicates that the families usually worked out the retirement problem to the mutual advantage of the parents and children.

Table 4. Place of residence of the father when he retired and the year of his retirement. \*

Year father retired	Moved to town		Lived on the farm	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1881-1900	-	-	4	16
1901-1910	-	-	6	24
1911-1920	4	16	-	-
1921-1930	2	8	4	16
1931-1940	-	-	2	8
1941-1946	3	12	-	-
Totals	9	36	16	64

\* Four fathers not now retired. After 1910 the church building was located in town.

We have seen how retirement was planned to the advantage of the parents. How were the children considered?

The data indicate that in most cases retirement was also planned so as to aid farm succession. There were 28 farms that the retiring fathers owned; of these only two were rented to outsiders and none sold to outsiders during the first year of retirement. On the other hand, five were sold to sons and 21 rented to sons the first of retirement. Thirteen of the farms that were rented to sons were later purchased by the same sons. Seven are still rented by sons. One son thought the home place too high priced so

he purchased another farm at a high price, lost it, and moved out of the settlement.

The parents' security was further provided for by their keeping the title of the farm in their hands for many years, often as long as they could. Table 5 presents data on this topic. The transfers made before the father retired were second farms usually purchased for the son. After the father retired he did not always transfer the farm immediately. In some cases it was held as long as 20 years. Usually however, if he were going to transfer it he did not hold it for a very long period of time. In case of the death of the father the widow usually held the title of the farm until her death.

Table 5. The status of the father at the time of the transfer of the family-owned farm to the sons.

Father's Status	Number	Per cent
Not retired	3	13
Retired	7	29
Deceased	14	58
Totals	24	100

It is these long periods of ownership by a widow with grown children that may make it difficult for the son to marry and take over the home place. The long period of ownership by the widow is probably the weakest farm succession practice which these farmers have followed in the past. It grew out of the desire of the husband to provide for his wife in case of his death. The above indicates that the settlement standards are concerned first with care of the parents and second with passing on of the farm.

Of the 14 farms not transferred until the death of the father, 11 were held by the widow until her death. This seems to have been the practice among these people for many years. In only two cases did the widow sell the farm to her son before she died. By way of contrast, if the father was left a widower he was often willing to transfer the farm while he was still living.

It hardly seems necessary to make the comment that none of these farmers has ever been on relief. Nor to my knowledge has any of them received old age pensions. None has gone to the county home to live or to any other type of poor farm. Such a record is typical of Mennonites everywhere. If the parents were in actual need the children have cared for them, but such cases have been few indeed. In other words the parents have security other than just that provided by money. Perhaps the greatest security which parents can have is to be provided by children that have been brought up in such a way that they feel the responsibility and desire to aid their parents. Then there is also the security provided by living in a community with other

Christian relatives and friends. Perhaps these last two are the best securities which can be provided on this earth.

The last problem studied is that of settlement of the estate. In the near future estate settlement practices may prove to be the crucial point in farm succession because of the increased stress being placed upon individual rights in our present day society. The stress on individual rights in our present day society is being strengthened by the increased separation of the members of the family as more of them are engaged in non-farm work. Historically the Mennonites have been concerned about individual rights and worth as well as individual freedom to choose what is right. However, oftentimes in practice the individual was subordinated for the good of the family or the brotherhood. Possibly as a result of the subordination our group has been able to survive where others have failed.

In the matter of dividing the estate in the Mennonite settlement, however, each child received an equal share. This practice has held for many years and still holds today. Some of the other practices, however, are changing. There does not seem to be a substitute at the present time for the traditional team of horses which the son received when he started out to farm for himself. The girls, since they usually do non-farm work, buy most of their own furniture instead of, as in the past, receiving it from their parents. Parents are also raising questions about inheritance practices. For example, how should any expenditure for education beyond the high school level be treated. Not all of the children will go on to college. How shall they be treated so as to receive a share of the inheritance equal to those that receive "higher education?" How shall the children be treated when one or two stay at home and work there while others never work at home? These and many other problems will probably cause a change in the inheritance practices of today.

The amount of financial assistance received from the parents is a very important aid in farm succession. Therefore an attempt was made to tabulate the data on this problem as shown in Table 6. The inheritance was counted only if it was received during the time the couple were paying for the farm. The family farms of the husband and wife were treated as if they were equal in value to each other and to the farm purchased. Such an assumption limits the importance of the data. However, some idea can be obtained in regard to the amount of the inheritance.

The figures of the table are not meant to suggest that the farmer took every cent he inherited and bought land with it but that he had the use of capital assets equal that percentage value of a farm. Half of the farmers purchased 76 per cent or more of their farms through earnings of the farm. Only about a third of the farm owners inherited an amount equal to one-half or more of the value of the farm. Of the four who had to purchase



one hundred per cent of their farm three had been completely financed by their father. They had the farm paid for before they

Table 6. The percentage of the farm which the present farmers had to purchase after receiving their inheritance.\*

Per cent Purchased	Present Farmers	
	Number	Per cent
0	7	18
1-25	1	3
26-50	4	10
51-75	7	19
76-99	15	40
100	4	10
Totals	38	100

\* The inheritance of the wife and the husband were added together.

received their inheritance. The percentage given for each farmer includes only the sale of the land. The sale of the live stock and equipment was considered a separate transaction.

The aid which inheritance gave in purchasing a farm is very important. In the case where the wife and the husband added their inheritance together it made a sizable payment on the farm. The other heirs were often willing to leave money in the farm, and unwilling to foreclose during hard times. Also the purchaser probably felt more duty bound to clear up the debt than he might have to some one else. Practices as the above worked together to aid farm succession.

According to data collected in the 1920 census (p. 39.) fifteen per cent of the farmers in the North Central States got their farms through inheritance. In the present study about eighteen per cent of the owners got their farms through inheritance. This would seem to indicate that these farmers did not inherit a substantially larger percentage of their farms than is common throughout the Mid-West.

The most important thing is that the Mennonite farmers did receive aid. Most of them got the aid when they were purchasing their farms, at which time it did them the most good. As one successful farmer said, "I would not have made it (because of the depression) if I had not received help from home." The same is probably true of many of the others; the family inheritance was probably just enough to make the difference between success and failure. These farmers were trained to use their inheritance.

Part of the "real" inheritance of the son consists of proper training in farming methods. Table 7 was prepared to find out how well prepared these men were when the farm was transferred to them. The pattern of training which was rather closely followed in this settlement began when the boy was big enough

to help with the chores. His home training usually continued until he was about twenty-one years old. After that time he could go out on his own. Many of them, however, continued to work at home under varying arrangements. After a period of this most of the young men started out to farm for themselves by renting.

Table 7. The farming experience of the son before a family owned farm was transferred to him.\*

Farming Experience	Number	Per cent
Had rented a family owned farm for a number of years	19	80
Had rented another farm	4	16
After only a father-son partnership	1	4
When the son started to farm for himself	-	-
Totals	24	100

\* This is the experience of the present owners on family-owned farms.

It is important to note that none of these fathers transferred a farm to a son when he was ready to start out to farm for himself. It seems that the son had to prove himself even though he was to inherit the farm. Of the four men that had farmed other farms all of them had also farmed the family-owned farm which they bought. The father-son arrangement was also on the farm which the son later bought. All of the sons had personally farmed the home-owned place before it was transferred to them. This experience is a distinct advantage toward successful farming. The young man then knows all the types of soil and how they respond. He knows the drainage, erosion, and other problems of the farm. Because of this knowledge he is better able successfully to plan the farming program. He should therefore pay for the farm sooner and be in position to pass it on to his son at an earlier age.

It is very difficult to get accurate information about the value and settlement of the estate. There was a great variation in market values of land during the periods studied. Too, there was a wide range in the size of the families and the value of the estates. The best information available indicates that they probably averaged between \$10,000 and \$15,000. Probably more important for farm succession than the size of the estate is the amount that stayed in the settlement. The estates were always divided equally among all the children. Since about sixty-six to seventy-five per cent of the children remained in the settlement it is assumed that they kept with them a similar percentage of the value of the estates. This is an important factor as it provides the actual capital for the purchase of farms as well as being a source of credit for other Mennonite farmers.

According to the best information available the present farmers are getting the major share of their inheritance at an earlier age than their fathers did. About 65 per cent of the owner-operators had received their inheritance by the time they were 35 years old as compared to only 34 per cent of the retired farmers. Getting the inheritance at an earlier age is a great aid in becoming a farm owner, \$1,000 received at the age of thirty-one at four per cent interest is worth about \$2,000 received at the age of fifty. When the alternative uses of the inheritance are considered it is worth much more than just double its value.

Probably because familism was so strong there did not appear to be any evidence of family troubles about repair of buildings and farming on family estates. In fact a number of times the farm operator told of constructing buildings before he owned the farm. Having watched these farms for years it does not seem to me that any operators on unsettled estates farmed in any way different from the farm owners. Buildings were built and repaired, fences repaired, and fields farmed according to the generally accepted practices.

So far in the Donnellson settlement familism has in most cases been strong enough to direct the settlement of estates for the good of the family. In fact the best solution to the problem of estate division is the development of a Christian family in which the members are really Christian. Such a solution is far superior to the present day institutionalized methods. Written agreements, wills and laws have a way of being broken. But when the law is in the spirit of the family members then it will not be broken.

I will close with the following statement which shows the height of perfection in family relationships toward which we are striving. When one of the elderly men passed away there was found in his papers a message to his children that read as follows: "I pray that you will divide the estate fairly and peacefully that there may be no hard feelings."



# Recreation in the Home

by

Glen R. Miller

There are many problems and questions, many perplexities, and many differing attitudes as regards the subject of recreation. There are those who ignore the area almost entirely. There are those who are hostile, taking a negative attitude, equating recreation with the pleasures of this world. Then there are those who could tolerate a very limited, prescribed amount of recreation. As a youth I was taken to task by my home minister for playing baseball against a team from a neighboring church. I asked him what activity we could engage in and he told me, "Well, there are singings and wakes." Some of us thought the latter was a bit too irregular for a satisfactory program of recreation.

Recreation for some connotes play or pleasurable activity that consumes time, energy, and often money, without producing any useful goods or financial returns. Recreation ordinarily is considered as taking place during leisure time. There are, however, those that claim they have no leisure time. Others have told me that their work is pleasurable, varied, and profitable in every way, and thus sufficient. This point is worthy of some serious consideration. To find in one's work, pleasure and stimulating satisfaction is a most worthy goal, and we can do much more in this area than we have. It will be very difficult however, for a man operating a punch press eight hours a day to accept this as sufficient. A farmer is, however, in an ideal situation for this kind of satisfaction. If he fails to promote a recreational program, it may largely be due to his own satisfied state plus his failure to see the need of others, particularly the need of youth. To successfully operate a farm or business may be exhilarating and satisfying to the owner, but if the sons are treated as cogs in a machine, being given orders to do this task and that, they may not find it so attractive. If, on the other hand, they are made participants in the real sense-sharing in the planning and in some of the proceeds--they will find even the work more pleasant and meaningful. Shop-work, handicrafts and skills of various kinds may be developed as a very high type of recreation and these activities may also produce practical results. Nearly everyone likes to make things. But the skills, the tools, the time, and the money to promote such undertakings are all necessary. Some fathers provide only make-shift tools and virtually no materials, others try to keep the boys and girls out of the shop for fear that they will be hurt or else that the tools will be damaged. Discouragement as a result soon follows. An investment in tools and materials may appear to some as an extravagance. To multiply gadgets and playthings may actually

be an extravagance and if overdone may serve to spoil the child. This is often the case with the rich man's son. Most of us err, however, very seriously at the opposite extreme. There are many parents who want to do something for their children, but feel a woeful lack in their own ability, skills, and knowledge. A community center where adult education is included would thus be valuable in many ways. Why could we not learn from each other and from trained experts, carpentry, welding, masonry, rug weaving, leather craft, auto mechanics, cookery, and a host of other things that would be a recreation to ourselves and would fit us to pass them on to our youth. The family as the basic unit of living society needs such an outlet.

In a book *The Peckham Experiment—a Study of the Living Structure of Society*, the authors, a doctor, Innes H. Pearse, and a biologist, Lucy H. Crocker, report how a group of young people in 1926 set out to find whether families in general would be interested in a health service different from a sickness service. One of their findings was that "periodic health overhaul is ineffective as a health measure in the absence of instruments of health providing conditions in and through which the biological potentiality of the family can find expression." In 1935 the second stage of this great experiment took form with the construction of a large center, where the entire family could find a great variety of recreational activities plus a regular health analysis. On the inside cover of this book the following statement is made: "Have you ever thought that health may be infectious? That it might spread through a community? That family after family could catch it and in catching it begin spontaneously to evolve a healthy society? It happened in Peckham. This book is the story of eighteen years work by a group of scientists whose records prove that health grows and spreads, not by treatment of sickness, not by prevention of disease, not primarily by any form of correction, whether of physical or social ills, but through cultivation of the social soil. What methods are to be used to enable health to grow in a community? Throughout this account of the thousand or more families studied, we find emerging new and profound principles and hitherto unlooked for methods which will benefit the modern world. What was once a scientist's untried theory has now become a significant succession of facts of which this very human document is a record." I might add that Peckham is in south-eastern London and the center was built so that it might cater to 5000 families living within one mile, or within walking distance.

The Reverend Joseph Manton in a radio address during the Catholic Hour, recently discussed recreation for the family. He pointed out that "for recreation the center of gravity, or rather the center of gaiety, seems to be shifting from the home to the joint with a juke box." Other comments made are as follows: "Gone



are the days, and from a better land, I know, when the young folks would gather round the family piano and sing singable songs or play hilarious games in the parlor. If they want music and song, instead of trying to sing themselves, they merely twiddle a radio dial and languidly listen to some pair of teary tonsils and a voice like a melancholy moo. If they want entertainment, instead of making the fun themselves, they saunter to the nearest movie, slump into a seat, and vacuously stare at other people's doings. If they have a half-hour on their hands to kill, though God knows why the poor half-hour should be murdered, instead of having some absorbing hobby, they dully flip over the pages of a picture magazine with their brain in neutral."

In all too many instances the deplorable conditions pictured by Reverend Manton are correct, and certainly he puts his finger on one of the serious ills of our society when he states that the home is no longer the center of gravity. But to berate the youth of our country will get us exactly nowhere. An intelligent positive program with correct motives must be forthcoming.

In a discussion such as this it would be profitless to attempt to list in a descriptive fashion all the possible varieties of recreational activities-everything from tiddly-winks on up. In fact that would become quite boresome.

We are sometimes a bit upset because certain of our friends care not one whit for the activities we like especially well. This should disturb no one. It is very fortunate that not everyone enjoys hunting or fishing for obvious reasons. There are those that enjoy flying and others that definitely do not. We have a great variety of tastes, a great variety of backgrounds. Add to that the fact that age gradually shifts our interests and we are in a better position to understand and appreciate the behavior and needs of others. Little Jennifer has just released from the hutch her much loved white rabbit which proceeds to hop about freely in the yard. Suddenly the terrifying sound of the neighbor's dog breaking through the fence assails Jennifer's ears. Horrible scuffling sounds follow and the little girl throws herself on the ground for she cannot bear to see the end. But after a while a voice assures her that all is well and the rabbit is safely back in the hutch. Later the little girl is heard telling herself, "I must remember always to have a good look before you cry." If perchance you think your young son never entertains a serious thought and can think of nothing but playing ball, swimming or fishing, or buying some more bubble gum, just remember that he is a boy and the force of circumstances and the requirements of life at a little later date will be such that he too will change just as you did. A further examination of the needs of the farmer, the needs of a villager, and the needs of the man of the city, all different to some extent, will tend to make us more understanding and helpful.



✓ We have as a group advanced considerably in our thinking and in our provisions in the field of recreation, but we have much farther to go. We have in general advanced from an almost total neglect or perhaps even an active opposition, through a mere toleration, to the point of promotion with objectives that have not as yet risen to where they should be. One has a feeling too often that a recreational program is tolerated and even promoted in order to keep the boys and girls at home or in order to keep them out of mischief and under control. Some would have the objective of getting back to the good old days of popping corn, reading around one lamp, and in general living somewhat as we lived in the horse-and-buggy days. Those days are, however, definitely past. We now live in a different world and must learn to adapt ourselves accordingly. It is possible to hold on to the best and even to bring back certain elements of richer living. In providing recreational activities for our youth, the primary urge or that which moves us must be our love for the youth. We must first of all have the sincere wish to see them happy-happy in such a way that will be profitable and have no drags, no bitter aftermath. If our primary aim is the cool calculating one of holding our youth and keeping them under control, this will be detected. Youth is quick to detect the true spirit back of what is done by the elders.

At the present stage we are sadly lacking in trained leadership. Parents themselves need teaching and training. Where are they to go to get this? Given time our schools and summer camps will have their effect. ✓ For this reason the athletic departments of our schools should be greatly expanded. More courses should be offered. ✓ More of our young people should obtain a truly extensive training in recreational leadership. Many of our communities would profit greatly in hiring full time recreational leaders who would work in close cooperation with the ministers to promote an active program. Mennonites would do well if they would appoint a full time recreational secretary with adequate assistance and an adequate budget to further study their needs, help in the whole process of further education, organization and giving aid where needed. For here is an area where life for all may be greatly enriched, character may be developed and strengthened, and a new drive and morale injected into the entire group including young and old.

And finally let me urge that every community build a recreational center—a center for all ages. For home is where the family is, whether that is actually at the fireside, or the back forty, the open road, or by the neighbor's creek.

# Religion in the Home

By

Ernest Bohn

History has revealed that the family is the basic institution of human society and that there has been no substitution for it. The family has been the most successful medium through which leaders of nations have been able to promote certain objectives whether they were good or evil in their consequences. When the German home was once led to teach its youth that the greatest thing he could do in life was to be a good soldier for the "Fatherland," the Kaiser was assured of the most powerful army in the world. On the other hand the leaders of Soviet Russia realized before a new ideology could be implanted in the Russian mind, the home with its closely integrated life must be broken up in order to root out a deeply seated faith and an institution--the Church. The home is in the most advantageous position of all other institutions to teach what it wants to teach.

To discover the tenacious hold that family environment and teaching have on the life of the child, try the experiment of teaching a child something that conflicts radically with the opinions and standards of his family, and watch the quick rush of dissent and resentment. Much may be done to counteract the influence of home training, but all through life all of us carry its mark with us. We never can get fully away from it.

O. E. Baker, a few years ago in a paper read at a Conference on Mennonite Community life, gave a few interesting statistics which showed how the family is the dominant force in the development of character. He cited the research work which had been done some years ago by the Institute of Social and Religious Research which had undertaken the difficult task of studying influences that were important in the formation of character among young people. Some 2000 individuals were studied. Information about them and their background was obtained from relatives and friends and recorded on schedules by highly trained sociologists. They were intricate statistical studies which Dr. Baker summarized from memory as follows: "If all the factors that influenced the character of these young people be totaled as 100 per cent, the school had exerted eight per cent, and most of this influence was owing to a few outstanding teachers. The influence of the Church likewise was eight per cent, but the Sunday School had exerted no clear influence." Dr. Baker explained this lack of the Sunday School having any influence on the basis that it holds the attention of the child for only one hour or so out of 80 or 100 waking hours in the week, and because many of the teachers are inexperienced and lack inspiration. Friends accounted for several



per cent more, but he was not clear of the exact figure on this. He did clearly recall that the family exerted a greater influence than all the other factors combined--60 per cent; and the mother exerted about twice the influence of the father. He indicated that on the farm the influence of the father would probably be greater than in the city.<sup>1</sup>

Such studies further confirm the great possibilities of home as a teaching and molding institution for the character of our youth. There are several reasons for this power of family and home influence. In the first place it begins early. It commences long before the child goes to school. Indeed it begins at birth, so that in the first few months of his life habits and attitudes are initiated that later are uprooted with difficulty. A second explanation is that of the intimacy of the family relationship. The members of the family usually come into more intimate touch with one another than those outside the home. Our closest associates usually influence us the most. Still another explanation is to be found in the emotional quality of the family relationship. Those whom we have learned to love and respect have great suggestive powers for us. Our responses are profoundly influenced by our attitudes to those who make suggestions to us. Sales in the business world are not always made on the basis of the quality of the goods, but the personal relationship between the salesman and his customer is usually the determining factor. The same principle works in the family. When a boy or girl says, "My father thinks....," or "My mother says ....," we may know that human relationship is to be considered as well as the factor of argument.

Thus when we regard the potency of the home as an educational instrument we can well see its great possibilities as a teacher of religion. When one stops to consider the amazing power which has been placed in our hands which we may use either for great good or for great evil one is almost overwhelmed with the responsibility that has been placed upon us as leaders in the homes of our country. Of all problems of family life none is more important than the consideration of ethical standards and spiritual values. These are elements that comprise our Christian Religion. The Christian religion is concerned with that which matters most for the welfare of the soul. Wherever people imbibe its teaching and spirit, we believe that it makes for the kind of way of life which is the best that human beings are capable of imagining, of in other words the kind of life most in harmony with the will of God. Therefore if we can find a way to impress upon parents what great possibilities for the welfare of mankind lie in the

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1. Mennonite Community Life, reprint from the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, April, 1945.



teaching of religion in our homes, we will have found the secret that will lift life more to the level that man is capable of exercising.

Thus far we have considered the home as being uniquely suited among all other institutions and organized units of society as a teacher and molder of character. Our next consideration is going to be that religion in family life also helps the home itself to be a more successful institution. We believe that the Christian religion, having within it the peculiar power for good that it has, will change what ever area of human society it may contact for a more Christian way of life. Let us now observe why this is true within the family.

1. The Christian religion teaches unselfishness and thoughtfulness to others. One of the greatest needs for successful marriage and a congenial family life is that of unselfishness of one toward the other. Unselfishness makes possible a greater regard for one another. The husband will consider how his desires may effect the wife and the wife vice versa. Parents will have the deepest concern for the welfare of their children. Children will have a greater consideration for their parents where their happiness is concerned.
2. The Christian religion instills a faith in God as a source of help that never fails us. Individuals in a home having this faith will learn to overcome some of their personal faults a little more easily. A Christian, trusting God, will feel that the Lord will help him to cast out all undesirable habits and traits which should not be there. Faith in God also relieves the family of undue strain and anxiety which makes for more agreeable living. It further gives strength for difficult times which helps individuals within the home to maintain their poise. Lack of poise often means lost tempers and hastily spoken words which destroy the atmosphere of love and congeniality in the home.
3. The Christian religion is one which teaches love and forgiveness. Thus it recognizes that none are perfect and is willing to overlook shortcomings and mistakes in others. Love will help one another to conquer the faults which all of us more or less possess. The forgiving spirit clears the home atmosphere of resentments and antagonism which, if allowed to accumulate, would make unbearable situations. Christian love and forgiveness create the kind of atmosphere in the home which is so essential to happiness in family life, and the healthy growth of Christian character.
4. The Christian religion is sensitive to the highest spiritual values in life. One of these spiritual values is that of companionship. In sharing life together stronger ties in the family group

are made possible. Companionship between husband and wife, between parents and children come to have greater significance for each other. It rises above the natural affection and devotion which exists in the animal world of parent to offspring, or of one mate to another. In the animal world it is part of the process of nature and is instinctive. The animal cannot appreciate the inspiration which comes to one sensitive to the spiritual value of companionship. The more an individual is sensitive to the spiritual values of life the more he will cherish and enjoy them. It is this factor which makes for a finer relationship and happiness in the home where the Christian religion has permeated the lives of the individuals within it. The Christian will think of his mate not merely as an individual to cater to his selfish interest, but as a child of God. Children are then not thought of as an economic liability or as a bother, but as an asset for the enrichment and joy of family life.

5. When the Christian religion is an important factor in the lives of those responsible for the success of the home, home making will be thought of as a sacred undertaking. The bringing of children into this world will be a grave responsibility. Parents will want to train and teach their children in the Christian faith and in the Christian "way" of life so that the best possible character may be produced. Their highest aim for their children will not be economic and material success but that they will grow up to be the kind of men and women who will render the greatest service to God for the sake of His Kingdom. Theirs is primarily a training for a life of service in whatever vocation they may choose. Success will be measured by the amount of good members of the family are doing in the world. Some of the greatest joys will be experienced by the parents when they hear of their sons and daughters who have stood for the right in some particular crisis of temptation, winning a spiritual victory, even at great material loss.

These are results which one may depend upon when religion has been an effective force in family life. It goes without saying that such homes do not "go on the rocks." It is significant to note that Stanley Jones says in his little book, "Abundant Living", when speaking about the Church producing steadier character, "The ratio of divorces is one in six marriages in general, (Jones said this in 1942) but only one in fifty among church people."<sup>2</sup> We must allow for the fact that not all church people are the kind of people who take their religion seriously enough to make it a vital factor in their family life, which would explain the absence of a one hundred per cent success figure among church people. Where we have a true Christian home we would expect nothing else but

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2. Page 314.

a successful home. In such a home, where there are two normal people who have pledged to each other to be faithful to one another "until death do us part" and who have determined to pattern their home on the fundamental principles of the Christian religion as stated above, it can not fail. The spiritual law that we "reap what we sow" seems to be just as fundamentally true in the realm of human relationships as physical law in the natural world.

We must now consider the techniques by which religion can be made most effective for good in the lives of those comprising the family group. It is one thing to have a religious experience yourself which may be of deep spiritual significance to you, and another thing to be able to impart religion in such a manner to the next generation that there will be reproduced an experience which will make religion a vital force in their lives. We want to consider how this may be done most effectively.

Before we pass on to the consideration of definite techniques, may we first call attention to the greater need of having a technique than formerly. We have already heard of the changing nature of the Mennonite home in general. Many changes have taken place in our American family life since the day of Whittier when he gave us his delightful picture of the early colonial home in "Snow Bound."

"Shut in from the world without,  
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,  
Content to let the north wind roar  
In baffled rage at pane and door,  
  
The house dog on his paws outspread  
Laid to the fire his drowsy head,  
The cat's dark silhouette on the wall  
A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;  
And, for the winter fireside meet,  
Between the andirons' straddling feet  
The mug of cider simmered slow,  
And apples sputtered in a row.  
And, close at hand, the basket stood  
With nuts from brown October's wood.  
What matter how the night behaved!  
What matter how the north wind raved!  
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow  
Could quench our hearth-fires' ruddy glow."

This vivid picture of quiet winter evenings of the typical New England home was given in a day when the home was the center of the community activities. It educated its children; it gave them opportunity for worship; it gave them moral discipline; it developed their skills of hand and mind. In brief it prepared them for whatever part they were to play outside of the parental home. Another factor which added to the high moral and spiritual character of the home in those days, was the fact that communities made serious attempts to keep out of their environment anything



that did not accord with standards maintained in their homes. When our forefathers were planning to open a new community in some territory to the west of them, the advertising literature that went out sometimes stated that only people of the best moral character and industry were invited to join the enterprise. This was quite different from saying that the new territory would merely make fabulously rich.<sup>1</sup>

This especially used to be true of our more isolated Mennonite communities where the standards and ideals of the community were those of the individual homes. In that kind of community environment it was not so difficult to uphold certain religious ideals, social standards of conduct, or a certain way of life, which were believed to be most in harmony with a Christian way of life. Today most of our Mennonite communities are no longer so strictly isolated and sheltered from undesirable outside influences which we have come to name as secular influences. This was most clearly shown in a study made a few years ago by Karl Baehr of several Mennonite Congregations of conservative and liberal groups of Mennonites in Elkhart County, Indiana.<sup>2</sup> Most of the activities that were once provided by the home are now being taken charge of by outside agencies in the community which use much more of our children's time than formerly. The public school now demands a large share of our children's time. Since this institution has become practically secular in its nature and since the little time provided by the church for religious education is not enough to be very effective it means that we must emphasize more than ever the quality of our family life. Today more than ever it is imperative that the home be prepared to teach religion.

#### 1. *The need of Christian parents*

As we now come to the consideration of definite techniques of teaching religion in the home, may we suggest as number one, a pair of parents who have thoroughly committed themselves to Christ and His way of life. First of all we must have parents who are Christian. For a major portion of religion in the home is going to depend on the attitudes, conduct and spirit that parents will manifest in their every day life. Their own attitudes toward religion and the church will soon tell the child how important they are to them. Furthermore it is difficult to give something to others which you do not possess yourself. Parents themselves must know what the Christian faith is and what it means in the experience of every day life. They themselves will have to know

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1. Grace Sloan Overton, *The Changing Home in a Changing Culture*, p. 51  
2. Karl Baehr, "The Secularization Process Among Mennonites," in *Proceedings of the first Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems*, Page 35-40

the saving knowledge of Christ, otherwise it will be impossible for them to save others.

Dr. W. Norman Pittinger wrote in the June 25, 1947 issue of "The Christian Century" some statements pertinent to this point: "This is the strange supposition that Christian standards of conduct, ideals of behavior, notions of right and wrong, can be expected to flourish among, or can be enforced upon, those who are not in any sense concerned with being Christians in belief and worship. . . . How can one expect those who are not Christian, who do not share the Christian faith and have no interest in Christian worship, to accept the Christian notion of Marriage and the Christian attitude toward divorce.

"The same fallacy is illustrated by the effort to thrust upon the younger generation, without first making them Christians, a standard of sexual morality which is possible only for Christians. The average young man and woman who is not a Christian is simply not interested." Then Dr. Pittinger went on to say that in order to learn how true this is of modern non-Christian youth we should ask the army and navy chaplains about it.

Evidently there are a great many homes where the Christian faith is not taught and exemplified enough in every day living to catch the imagination of the young people in them. Consequently it is causing an alarmingly large portion of youth in our country to grow up with pagan notions of life.

## *2. The Importance of the Home Atmosphere*

We have emphasized the necessity of starting with Christian parents because it is they who determine the atmosphere in the home in its initial stage and they continue to be dominant influence as the children grow up to maturity. It is the atmosphere of the home which is so tremendously important in this first step of teaching religion to the child before he is old enough to understand formal teaching through the medium of language. It will be the Christian spirit of love and kindness in the daily association of father and mother with one another, manifested in the tone with which they speak to one another and to the new born babe, which will be the language that the child can best understand at first. If it is an atmosphere permeated with the Christian way of life the child will have gotten off on a start, which is very essential for the first faint beginnings of the formation of character. Just as pure, fresh air and sunshine is imperative for the infant's physical health so it will be just as imperative that the pure atmosphere of Christian love pervades the home to give the child a start in a sound healthy Christian character. Instinctively the little infant seems to sense its environment as to whether it is good and pleasant to be in it or whether it is undesirable and disagreeable. It somehow senses what the feelings are of those



about him. Dean Luther Weigle says, "Feelings are contagious; they are inducted from person to person. Happiness begets happiness; fear begets fear. It is hard to keep from feeling depressed when others round us are gloomy.<sup>1</sup> The child being especially open to feelings, suggestions from others, and, being a great imitator, is very readily influenced by any environmental factors he comes in contact with.

Some modern psychologists tell us that the first five years of a child's life practically determine the character and destiny of a child. Since the home is practically the only institution which is in contact with the child's life the first five years, outside of a brief hour spent in Sunday School each week, it is not difficult to see how much this early home atmosphere is responsible for the beginning of the child's religious training which has already begun from the day of birth.

### 3. *The Place of Definite Religious Instruction*

The next technique which we could consider in the teaching of religion in the home is that of definite religious instruction which the child is most apt to receive for the most part from its mother who is almost in constant association with him. Here an abundant opportunity is afforded to give definite religious instruction through the telling or reading of Bible stories. It seems that most children are eager to listen to stories when told in the language that they can understand. Profound religious truths can be taught through the telling of stories. For example the love of God by telling the parable of the Prodigal Son, by trying to make as vivid as possible the details of the experience this wayward son had and the Father's great joy at his return. Or one may tell or read the story of the lost sheep which if a little imagination is used can be made quite interesting to children. And of course many of the Old Testament stories afford opportunity in showing how God was displeased with sin and how He was pleased with certain Old Testament characters who lived a life that was pleasing to Him. These stories are very adaptable in teaching moral standards to youth.

Another method of instruction, for which many opportunities come to every parent, is through answering the child's questions. To raise questions seems to be the natural and normal procedure of the child's questing little mind while it is exploring this new world into which it has come. Children are veritable little philosophers and raise questions that test the dexterity of the most acute and erudite minds. An editor of one of the national magazines for parents remarks that she receives more letters about the child and religion than any other concern of parents for their

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1. Luther Weigle, *The Training of Children in the Christian Family*



children.<sup>1</sup> They ask questions of theology that all too many parents are very ill-prepared to answer, because they have a very vague notion themselves of what the Christian religion teaches. Here Christian parents have a splendid opportunity to teach a little theology which may well lay the foundation for the child's religious faith throughout his life.

We must remember that a child comes into the world devoid of all knowledge and understanding. His mind though at the beginning a blank is a potential seedbed in which we may plant what teachings we will. The babe that is born into our homes can with equal ease be made into a Christian, or a Hindu, or a Mohammedan. He brings with him the instinct to respond to the appeal religion makes to his life, but the kind and quality of religion will depend largely on the religious ideas and concepts placed in his mind through instruction and training. Parents need to have a deep concern as to what they are going to teach their children in religion. Take for example the teaching of the concept of God. The child must come to know about God even as a little child. Long before he can understand about religion, he can learn about a heavenly Father, at least to the degree that a child can comprehend the God concept. Further meaning of God will come to him out of experience as he is growing up.

Gradually as the child grows older the training and teaching in the home helps to form a more clear concept of religion and the part it is to play in life. This will not come through any definition, nor through a set of precepts. It will come through instruction and wise counsel many times while in conversation around the family table at meal time or while at work or play. Opportunities come in many varied ways in which the boy or girl will not feel that you are preaching to him. And finally it will come to have depth of meaning as youth is in daily contact with his parents in the home and strong and noble men and women who express the Christian ideal in their daily lives.

As the boy and girl become a little older reading should also play a large part in their religious development. This is most easily stimulated through religious fiction of a high type which teaches some religious truth, or portrays noble Christian living. Church papers especially written for youth are very helpful. Above all the Bible should have found a place in the reading of the boy or girl, for it is the source book of the Christian religion. We must seek to make youth acquainted with its fundamental spiritual truths, for to be ignorant of them would be to lack one of the chiefest instruments for religious growth and development. To lack a knowledge of the Bible in our lives is to deprive our-

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1. Margueritte Harmon Bro., *When Children Ask*, P. 28

selves of the ethical and religious help needed to redeem us from our sins and set us on our rightful destiny.

#### 4. *Family worship*

This brings us to the discussion of the technique of family worship. The teaching of religion rests upon a knowledge of the Bible. A place for its use must be found where it will best attract the attention of members in the family to its rich store of varied literature and religious teaching. We feel that this can best be accomplished through family worship. When some twenty odd years ago a correspondent from "The Country Gentleman" came to visit the Mennonite Church in Berne, Indiana, he was very much interested in discovering why this large rural church should be such a live, growing congregation with all the indications of a healthy spiritual life present in all the activities of the church. He asked the same question separately of a number of individuals including the Sunday School Superintendent and the aged pastor who had led the activities of this congregation for thirty-three years: "How do you account for the spiritual interest manifested in your church when so many rural churches are dwindling away." The answer which each individual gave was practically the same—family worship in their homes. The Superintendent replied in these words: "This big church and Sunday School has its roots planted deeply in the homes of our people. I do not know one Mennonite home in this community in which there is not daily worship and Bible study. The Church and Sunday School are merely the flower and fruit of the tree; its sustenance comes from family worship."<sup>1</sup>

We need to re-emphasize the importance of the vital place family worship holds in the religious life of the family. We hear it often said by many of our people living in the industrial sections of our country that in this modern hurried age as it is and with its divergent interests for different members of the family that it is practically impossible to maintain the old family altar in exactly the same form in which it used to be observed, when the entire family gathered together for a period of worship. I think we need have no hesitation in saying that if we cannot maintain in our modern life something which will give us the spiritual values that the old family altar did for a previous generation whether in the exact form or not of the old types we will pay heavily for our failure. Thousands can testify that it was the influence of family worship in their homes which served as the creator of many of the finest impressions that have come to them

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1. A. B. Macdonald "What family worship does in one Church," in *The Country Gentleman*, Reprinted by Committee on Family Worship Brotherhood of Eastern District Conference of Mennonites 1922.



in life. Dr. Albert Beaven says, "In the prayers of my father and mother I came to feel the presence of the personal Christ speaking through them to my boyish soul and in times of temptation the memory of their prayers were a veritable wall of defense."<sup>2</sup> Somehow, when a group as intimately associate together as the family, come together in worship, a sense of the presence of God is created which is a great inspiration in the humdrum and temptation of daily living.

Certainly in almost every family, before the children have arrived at the age when they enter various types of work which may take them away from the home at different hours of the day, there can be arranged some particular time of the day, when the entire family may worship together, by reading some portion of Scripture, sometimes singing an appropriate hymn, with members of the family taking part in prayer. Many types of devotional books have been prepared in recent years by various denominations for the purpose of aiding family worship. They help to make the daily meditation more systematic and also more interesting with comments offered on the Scripture lesson.

#### 5. *Teaching to Pray*

In family worship children may also learn to pray. Certainly prayer is an important factor in religion. It has a tremendously important part to play in the development of Christian character. Not only is prayer important as an aid in the development of the religious life in youth, but prayer also reveals the struggles that go on within our children. Albert Beaven says that it was in that way that "Our mother was then able in her tactful way to bring to us a sense of spiritual comradeship in the fight we were making."<sup>3</sup> It goes without saying, that grace at table is also a time when children may all take part. We will need to teach our children the importance of prayer. It develops a child's religious thinking when he is taught what he ought to pray about. When he has learned why he ought daily to return thanks to God, something will have happened in his attitude toward life.

How to make religion a vital factor in the home, so that the best results may be obtained from it in the religious life of the family, should be of deep concern of all Christian parents. In churches where its members have kept up the interest of the religion in their homes it has had a definite bearing on the religious life of the Church. We believe that if a survey could be made of the homes representing our churches it would be very revealing

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2. Albert Beaven, *The Fine Art of Living Together*. P. 143

1. *Ibid.*, P. 143



in showing the relation between the character of the home and the Church. Much has been done in recent years by various denominations to increase the interest of religion in the home but much more should be done by all of us as pastors, and conferences in helping to create literature which will be an aid to parents in making religion a greater force for good in the home. Upon a healthy religion in our family life rests our future church and civilization.

# **An Ideal Pattern for a Christian Home of Today**

**By Mrs. Paul Erb**

We would not ask for the home of our grandparents. We could not go back to those socially simple days if we would, and certainly it would not be wisdom to do so if we could. Inevitability of change we must acknowledge, and use our energies to give direction to the changing home. Some trends in the family pattern of today Christians cannot follow. Here it is that we must build homes according to the plan God outlined. God expects of us, as he did of Abraham, that we should command our households after our Christian faith.

The Christian family is not a thing. It is an organism of personal relationships. It is made up of persons who live together in this most important of human relations. But the family has to do with things, and the family has been rather quick to adopt improved household equipment. Good changes have been made to adapt the living to improved economic, educational, religious, and recreational conditions. We would not want to give up our automatic refrigerators, our children's and adults' schools, our good religious instruction devices, nor our free playgrounds. It is those aspects of the family life which do not rest upon a material basis that may not have kept pace with the modern changes. In this area the Christian must guard lest the real function of the home be lost.

Some would have us believe that many trends in family life today portend the decline of the family. Trends with some significance in this direction are the declining birth rate, the nursery-school movement, the emphasis on the welfare of the individual rather than on the family, and unconventional sex arrangements. I do not fear that these trends will be permanent, for the family is in God's plan. One does see now and again certain trends back to the older patterns of the home.

We must recognize certain trends in the family today, including the following: from large to small families; from a productive unit like the home of our great-grandfathers to the dependent home of today; the tendency to transfer many educational, religious, and recreational functions to outside agencies; the changing status of woman in which she tends to become equal to man and independent of him; the disintegrating of the family as each member goes his own way with little shared activity in the family group; the detaching of the family from its kinship group. Some of these newer patterns are good; some are dangerous.

To construct a pattern for the Christian home we should consider first the main functions of the home from the Biblical standpoint, and then study what is required in order to work out this ideal pattern.

God joined Adam and Eve as "one flesh," and commanded them to "be fruitful and multiply." The propagation of the race certainly is a main function of marriage. "Children are an heritage of the Lord; happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." Marriage is the only sanctioned institution of propagation. God does not approve any arrangement by which children are born out of wedlock. He commands that women should marry, bear children, and guide the house. This propagation is also God's provision for preserving the culture attained at any one time or in any family life, for we pass on to our children more than a biological existence. We impart to them both in heredity and in training an attitude and a way of living, and thus pass on to posterity the way of the good life which we have learned.

Again, God has put great happiness into the union of a man with a woman who is meet for him. The love of a man for his wife and of the wife for her husband is used by the apostle Paul as an analogy of the love of Christ for his bride, the Church, and for the answering love of the Church to Christ. Entirely apart from the function of propagation, God has ordained that there should be marital happiness between the man and his wife. One life supplements the other, and both through this relationship are enlarged and enriched. In marriage God has made provisions for the two mates to receive adequate satisfaction of their sex needs. Marriage gives stability to the sex life. Here sex expression is given its proper place among human values, and enhances marital bliss. Social and economic security may also be an element in this happiness.

Another function of the family in which God has given definite instruction is that of training the children in the way they should go, so that they may come to maturity with health of body, strength of character, and readiness to begin another family. The home provides the necessary environment for growth according to the laws which God put in the child, helps the child to adjust himself to his social and economic environment, and builds good personality.

A pattern for a home that will accomplish these ends and at the same time be thoroughly Christian in spirit will now be suggested under five family relations, namely the husband-wife relation, the parent-child relation, the family-house relation, the family-community relation, and the family-God relation. There is no intended significance in the order nor does the discussion intend to be exhaustive in comprehension or in description. The guiding principle in directing the building of the pattern is, what will make the home a Christian bulwark?

*The husband-wife relation.* The pattern for this relation is best defined by love. "Husbands, love your wives." The union must be one of genuine love, devoted love, love that will grow in con-



fidence and trust. When the bridegroom carries his bride over the threshold of their new home, the love of I Corinthians 13 must enter with them if the home is to be a happy one. Many homes that break down have no love, or too little love to oil the machinery. Hasty marriages based on physical infatuation or motivated by questions of policy and convenience soon wear out.

The two partners to a marriage vow must really want a satisfying marriage relationship. Without this desire "As long you both shall live" is not heard or is mocked at. The divorce evil has its roots in vows taken without true love and in lack of resolve to make marriage a success. Knowing that all married people have difficult adjustments to make, the Christian home and church should give oral and written help for maintaining, strengthening, purifying, and making happy and beautiful the marital life. Those counseling should be aware of all the lurking enemies to success in married happiness, and be wise in routing those enemies, promoting understanding, and strengthening right purposes.

Marriage other than "In the Lord" does not meet God's requirements, and therefore mars the husband-wife relationship. Marital unity can scarcely survive important religious differences. All of this points to the necessity of both being good Christians and strong in the Lord, filled with the same Spirit, motivated by the same spiritual objectives and devoted to the same communion of faith.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your husband as unto the Lord." "The head of the woman is the man." Women are to be "obedient to their own husbands." The wife is to "see that she reverences her husband." A definite trend in family patterns today is the change of scriptural headship of the man to an equality of the husband and wife. This tends to make woman independent of man and spoils the home spirit. The wife is encouraged to seek a job for her self-realization. She has her career and her property, independent of her husband. Children are often not desired, and when they do come, they only aggravate the situation. We believe God has made man to receive and enjoy the reverence of woman. If he is no longer the head, the family soon loses its proper form and spirit. Just as the church must recognize the headship of Christ if there is to be proper functioning, so the wife must respect and recognize the headship of the husband. If there is no head, there is no family. However, wherever Christianity has gone, womanhood has been highly respected. The wife of a Christian home is not a slave nor inferior to man spiritually or intellectually, but she is under her husband in a God-ordained relationship.

*The Parent-child relation.* The command of God to parents is to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In this aspect of family life the Christian home pattern is

very different from that of the world. Perhaps the most prevalent philosophy of the modern American home is that innately the child knows how to grow up. Let him grow! Let him go! There is a dangerous trend away from parental authority, till each child becomes a law unto himself. Arbitrary authority has waned and no doubt should have, but Christian parents, true Christian parents, assume their obligations very conscientiously. They win and hold the confidence of the child with time, thought, reading, companionship, and prayer. They exercise effective, if not arbitrary, authority. Each child is regarded as a person in his own right, but as a child to be trained to a life of happiness and usefulness.

Moreover, this training is the obligation of the Christian parent. It cannot be delegated to other agents with the results laid at their doors. The primacy of the home in training must be admitted and assumed. It is a great responsibility to bring each child of the family (and they often differ so much) to the full realization of his potentialities, but it is also a grand opportunity. The biological part of bringing children into the world is rather easy as compared to training them in the way God wants them to go. God commands us to perform this task and encourages us with the promise that if we train our children in the way they should go, when they are old they will not depart from it. If we accept God as Lord we will want to obey and to give ourselves to the carrying out of this training. The greatest test of the Christian home is whether it inspires and teaches the children in Christian attitudes and truths. If we fail here, we fail in the greatest obligation of the home.

Should the Christian wife take a job other than keeping the home? An implication of the change in the size of family is that the woman has time for an independent career after her children leave the home or come to adolescent years. Middle and old age might be lonely if there were no work outside the home in which the woman could find satisfaction. The solution here must be found in view of the effect of the mother's giving herself to the other job. Does it detract from the interest in homemaking? Is there a tendency for the wife to leave the home when the children need her? Is not this a prominent factor in the disintegration of the home? When Mother goes to work, few hours are left for building the family spirit. Are there not many commonly omitted duties of motherhood and wifehood that should occupy the wife and mother? The church and Bible school cry for workers with time to give good service. The woman who has mothered her own children well can make a real contribution also to the life of her community.

The pattern for nurturing children in the Lord is quite involved. Three definite aspects are: the atmosphere of the home, the ma-



terial environment the home affords, and the training or disciplining exercised there.

A Christian home is known for its atmosphere of love, peace, and happiness. Each member of the family must feel secure there. To each "There is no place like home." This atmosphere is the result of the living that goes on there. Godly parents live godly lives. Love at home must be very patient, very kind, must know no jealousy, must never be rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful, never gladdened when others go wrong, but gladdened rather by goodness; slow to expose, eager to believe the best, always hopeful and patient (after Moffat's translation). There can be no conflict between home living and home atmosphere. We can't bring up Good Samaritans with prejudice in our living. Not the profession or the creed of parents, but rather their actual daily living, makes the atmosphere of the home. Perhaps the greatest need is parents who walk in the Spirit of God, showing forth the attributes of that Spirit. The daily schedule of each home must provide time to sit at the feet of Jesus. The pressure of organizational activities upon the time of each member of home is great today. Many of these seem almost essential. Parents and children together must decide on how to make room for the best values.

The Christian home must provide an environment rich in the elements that make for nurturing in the Lord. The imperatives for our time, energy, and money are those things that function most in this nurturing. Not what we have always had, or what others have, or what costs the least energy, but what the children need—that we must put into their environment. Good music, good reading, constructive play, materials and possibilities, hobby privileges, Christian education, and travel, are some of the not-too-expensive rights of the child.

The third significant factor in nurturing is Christian training. "Provoke not your children to wrath." Love and wisdom will direct us in handling our children. We may encourage them to tell the untruth by the way we treat them when they have been disobedient. We may make a child very unhappy by our over-supervision of his play. A child may lose his respect for his father because of that father's unreasonable requests or demands. Children must be treated with fairness, with respect, with courtesy, with sympathy, with consideration of age, with understanding, with gentleness, and yet with firmness. Parents must study to show themselves approved unto God in their important function as Christian disciplinarians.

The Christian family involves living together in mutual understanding. It is a co-operative project, a love unit. The family should be found at home having good times together. There will be a living room which is true to its name. There all the members



of the family will play together, listen to or produce music together, read together, work together at their hobbies, share each other's burdens, help each other in striving for some goal. They will work together to keep the house. Any failure in the spirit of co-operativeness is fatal to effective family Christian living.

*Family-house relationships.* The house of the Christian family must serve the family and must not ask the family to conform itself to the house. The house should be designed to serve spirits as well as bodies. It may be poor; the furnishings may be meager, and luxuries may be missing. And yet the home may be filled with a lovely family spirit. The effect of conveniences must be carefully weighed. Mother might work outside the home to earn money to buy a Bendix washer in order to save energy, and then work out some more because so little time is consumed in washing with the Bendix. Modern conveniences are Christian only if we use the savings afforded by them in order to strengthen ourselves in Christian duty. Disintegration of the family is strongly suggested in the home that can meet our physical needs so automatically that family life is mechanized. Labor-saving devices, of course, may be rightfully used. They may give us time and energy for studying the child, for strengthening the spiritual life, for giving us wholesome recreation and companionship with our children, for meeting our obligation to church, school, and community.

The house in which a Christian family lives is a co-operative project. The members call it "our house." In the house budget all the members are considered. Room is granted to each member to meet his needs. Expenditures are made after a family council and a family decision. The housekeeping is a sharing, duties being assigned and assumed at the family council table.

*Family-community relations.* Sometimes we wish we could live without consideration of any others than our own family. The facts are that we feel more obligation to outside institutions than our parents did. First, there is the church which God ordained. Our relationship here is vital, since Christ, the Head of the church, is the Lord of the Christian home, too. The church is the finest ally of the family, for here we receive help for spiritual growth in knowledge, in the emotional life, and in Christian service. When we train our children for the Lord we train them for the church. If for no other reason than the practical, one family should have one church. The Christian families make up the church, support all the activities of the church, and constitute the church. However, the full program of the church today becomes sometimes a competitor of the home, and the members of the family dare not allow even the church to crowd out the primary claim of a strong family life.

Then the Christian home has some concern for people of the

community — friends to cheer, neighbors to befriend, the ill to visit, the poor to serve with provisions, needy souls to feed with the bread of life, neglected children of other homes to nurture, and many contacts in buying and selling to make Christian. In fact, every contact of each member of the Christian home should make a Christian impact upon the community. A home without an evangelical influence is hardly Christian. And how our communities need this influence! Children from strong Christian homes should have a marked effect upon the general spirit of the elementary schools of the community. Too often we think in terms of a parochial school solving problems that belong to the home.

The vocation of the father of the home may take him, and sometimes other members of his family, into some outside activity, such as school teachers' association, parents' meetings, school functions, dairymen's meetings, ministerial meetings, and committee meetings of various kinds. In this scientific age we can't live in this world and disregard the movements for bettering our work. The problem is to give time to vocational and community interests without robbing the family of the interest which it deserves.

The visitor and the stranger, yes, even the lone wanderer and hungry soul, or even the tramp, must find an open door in the Christian home. Hospitality is an essential Christian virtue to be practiced and taught.

*The family-God relation.* To have on our walls the motto, "God is the head of this house," may be only a blatant boast. Hanging something on the wall does not necessarily describe the spirit of the home. Perhaps it would be better to hold before us as an ideal some such prayer as "Heavenly Father, help us to live in a happy, Christian family." The Christian family is moved by the Spirit of Christ. The whole family situation is dominated by Him. The religion of the family does control the life of the home, no matter what that religion may be. Most necessary and absolutely essential in the ideal pattern for a Christian home is the genuineness and vitality of the Christianity of the parents. A denominational name or a church affiliation does not make a home Christian. The responsibility of building a Christian family is a great test of the strength of the parents' faith and love. The diligence required for teaching the children the commandments of God, the love necessary to admonishing and nurturing them in the Lord, the wisdom and patience needed to train them up in the way they should go, can come only from above. Jesus showed us this in His discipline of Martha. Martha rated her home short in service. Mary raised the standard by taking time to sit at Jesus' feet.

The Bible in the home, family worship in spirit and in truth, the private devotion of each member of the home, Christian lit-

erature in books and periodicals, Christian art, the hymns of the Christian faith — these cannot be disregarded, for they make the family spirit beautiful, strongly Christian, and influential. Everything in such a home is seen from the Christian's viewpoint.

We can have Christian homes if we want them. It is a matter of dominant desire, intelligent resolution, and a willingness to pay the price. I do think that functional education for ideal Christian homes is lagging behind the felt need. Many busy parents hunger for help. Others could have their eyes opened by the right kind of an educating program. The therapy of human spirits, in the area of husband-wife, father-son, mother-baby, parent-adolescent relationships, is difficult, but it is needed, is possible, and is greatly appreciated when given effectively. To help precipitate the most Christian Biblical pattern out of the trends and conflicts of modern family living, the church should provide immediately good pre-marital and marital counseling and education for a new and better Christian family pattern. Parents' conferences, service through church publications, teaching literature, preaching on family themes, homemakers' organizations within the church, counseling services, and child training and homemaking courses in our church schools — these are potentially effective means.

For the happiness of our homes, for the salvation of our children, for the testimony of Christ in this America, let us arise and build the ideal Christian home.



## Summary Statement of the Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems 1947

*By*

Carl F. Smucker, Bluffton College

This was a significant conference. Meeting at a time when home life in America is being challenged, it was most appropriate that the conference theme should be "The Mennonite Home."

Home life has been described as the highest and finest product of our civilization. It was stated that the decline of the family means a decline of our civilization. The conference set itself to the task of "in gathering" of facts about the Mennonite family. Is it possible to find answers to the questions: How can we maintain strong Mennonite family life? Can we build Mennonite communities which can nurture family life and combat the increasing secularization of all of life?

It was reported in a formal paper that there apparently was little "social unrest" among Mennonite youth. A member of the conference (Dr. Gingerich) in the discussion stated in view of his travels through C.P.S. camps he received the impression there was a certain amount of unrest and that the C.P.S. men did not approve of a negative approach to their problems.

Asking for an answer to the question "Have we made progress in Mennonite education in the home?" (Dr. N. E. Byers) replied that "we are more intelligent about Mennonite principles than we were twenty-five or fifty years ago." Service in C.P.S., foreign relief, voluntary summer service, and other M.C.C. projects have helped bring this about. We have also made great gains because of religious activities in the church such as Sunday School, Christian Endeavor, and conference activities which were not present fifty years ago.

Several recreational projects were cited which indicate what can be done to provide wholesome recreation for Mennonites in Mennonite communities. The project at Kitchener, Ontario was set up as a Mennonite youth center and later expanded to include all youth from the immediate vicinity.

In Kansas one rural Mennonite community built their own swimming pool, picnic grounds, and play grounds so that they do not have to go 15 to 20 miles away to a secular type of park. This has meant much in making it possible for these youth to participate in creative recreation. This type of recreation should have a bearing on the recreation that is provided in the home. One example was cited about a boy who was taught how to ope-

rate an outboard motor in a youth center and later used this knowledge when his own family was on a vacation.

There was discussion concerning the spiritual headship of man in the marriage relationship and the philosophy that such a partnership is a 50-50 equal relationship. The trend toward making woman independent of man was described as not being Biblical. It is a dangerous trend for women to work out of the home and to assume the role of wage earner when this is done only to supplement an already adequate income.

God has meant that man and wife cooperate and share in family responsibility, but that the family needs a head which is the man. Just as with the church, with no head there is no church. Without Christ there can be no church.

Conferences on the Mennonite family should be held at regular intervals. This important aspect of our culture is the cornerstone of our way of life. God has committed unto us a mission of faith and service that is builded upon the family.

A summarized statement of some of the trends in Mennonite family life and aspects of the family which should be studied further is outlined as follows:

1. The Mennonite family is apparently a relatively strong family and has not been greatly affected by drinking, divorce, movies, dancing, delinquency, and other similar social evils.

2. However, farm life alone will not insulate our families from modern trends of secularization such as described above.

3. A need for further and continual social research was indicated by the difficulty in securing social data such as personal and social attitudes, practices relating to the type and frequency of family worship, and methods used to transmit Mennonite ideals to the oncoming generations.

4. Family life is inevitably affected by change. We cannot stand still in point of time nor do we wish to go back. We do not live in the same world into which we were born.

5. There is a need for a clearly expressed conviction that we can live in our time in a manner that is truly Christian.

6. More research is needed in relation to the large scale practice of inter-marriage of Mennonite families. Is it conducive to strong family strains? Are there hazards?

7. There seems to be further need for research concerning the needs of the aged. This is indicated because the life span is being extended and there are more older persons than ever before in our history. Do the aged wish to care for themselves in their

own homes? Or, do they wish to be cared for in institutions? Do relatives assume proper responsibility in the care of their aged?

8. More knowledge in relation to the health of the Mennonite family. How can we reduce the infant death rate? How can we improve our general health? Is the farm as healthy a place to live as the city or village environment?

9. How do our families support themselves when there is a loss of the breadwinner? Is the church supporting widows left with smaller children? How many are receiving old age assistance or aid to blind?

10. What is being taught in our Mennonite colleges in marriage courses and through marriage counselling?

11. Do we have adequate recreational outlets for our families? Are there specific games and social meetings that can teach our children the way of love and non-resistance?



**REGISTRATION LIST 1947 CONFERENCE**

Bauman, I. W. ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Bauman, Mrs. I. W. ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Bender, Paul ....	Goshen, Indiana
Bohn, Ernest ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Brenneman, Naomi ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Byers, N. E. ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Detweiler, Mrs. I. R. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Ediger, Elmer ....	Akron, Pennsylvania
Enz, Jacob J. ....	Nappanee, Indiana
Erb, Paul ....	Scottsdale, Pennsylvania
Fadenrecht, George H. ....	Hillsboro, Kansas
Fadenrecht, Mrs. George H. ....	Hillsboro, Kansas
Fretz, J. W. ....	North Newton, Kansas
Gingerich, Melvin ....	Goshen, Indiana
Gingerich, Mrs. Melvin ....	Goshen, Indiana
Gingerich, Owen ....	Goshen, Indiana
Gingerich, Roman ....	Goshen, Indiana
Good, Howard ....	St. Jacobs, Ontario
Good, Viola M. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Graber, Mrs. C. L. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Harshbarger, Eva ....	North Newton, Kansas
Hartzler, J. E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Hartzler, Levi C. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Hartzler, Robert W. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Hershberger, Guy F. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Hershberger, Mrs. Guy F. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Hertzler, Silas ....	Goshen, Indiana
Hertzler, Mrs. Silas ....	Goshen, Indiana
Hookey, Mary E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Imhoff, Ralph ....	Eureka, Illinois
Krahn, Cornelius ....	North Newton, Kansas
Kreider, A. E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Kreider, Mrs. A. E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Kreider, Carl ....	Goshen, Indiana
Kreider, Mrs. Carl ....	Goshen, Indiana
Kreider, L. C. ....	North Newton, Kansas
Lantz, D. Parke ....	Chicago, Illinois
Laurense, Leo ....	Mennonite Seminary, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Lehmann, Carl M. ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Linder, Annabel ....	Louisville, Ohio
Miller, Ernest E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Miller, Mrs. Ernest E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Miller, Glen ....	Goshen, Indiana
Miller, Virgil ....	Sterling, Ohio
Mishler, Harold ....	Scottsdale, Pennsylvania
Nunemaker, H. E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Neufeld, I. G. ....	Hillsboro, Kansas

Pannebecker, S. F. ....	Chicago, Illinois
Raid, H. D. ....	Ames, Iowa
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Ramseyer, Mrs. Lloyd L. ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Regier, Arnold ....	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Regier, Margaret ....	Chicago, Illinois
Regier, Minna D. ....	Chicago, Illinois
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Schultz, Harold ....	South Bend, Indiana
Schultz, Mrs. Harold ....	South Bend, Indiana
Schultz, J. S. ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Shank, David ....	Goshen, Indiana
Shelly, Wilmer S. ....	Topeka, Indiana
Slagel, Mrs. A. W. ....	Topeka, Indiana
Smith, Pearl ....	Eureka, Illinois
Smucker, Carl F. ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Smucker, Don E. ....	Chicago, Illinois
Smucker, Mary E. ....	Bluffton, Ohio
Soldner, Dora M. ....	Berne, Indiana
Stoltzfus, Grant M. ....	Scottdale, Pennsylvania
Umble, John ....	Goshen, Indiana
Weaver, Mrs. J. E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Weaver, Laura ....	Goshen, Indiana
Weldy, Dwight ....	Goshen, Indiana
Wenger, J. C. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Wittlinger, C. O. ....	Grantham, Pennsylvania
Wittlinger, Mrs. C. O. ....	Grantham, Pennsylvania
Wittlinger, Mrs. Mary ....	Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania
Wyse, Olive G. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Yake, Lois ....	Scottdale, Pennsylvania
Yoder, Anna E. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Yoder, J. H. ....	Denbigh, Virginia
Yoder, Paton ....	Santa Barbara, California
Yordy, Anna ....	Goshen, Indiana
Ziegler, C. C. ....	Goshen, Indiana
Ziegler, Mrs. C. C. ....	Goshen, Indiana

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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